Commentary

Volume Seventy-eight, Number Four, October 1984

Jewish Voters & The "Politics of Compassion"
IRVING KRISTOL & CRITICS

Has the Burger Court Gone Too Far?
WALTER BERNS

An Open Letter to Milan Kundera
NORMAN PODHORETZ

Why the Schools May Not Improve
JOSEPH ADELSON

How to Rescue International Law
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Of Arms, Men & Monuments
TOD LINDBERG

Naming Day in Berkeley
LOUIS RAPOPORT

"The Bostonians" Inside Out
RICHARD GRENIER

Democracy's Future
JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL & CRITICS

Books in Review: Paul Johnson/Charles Krauthammer/Steven C. Munson/ Jonathan D. Sarna/Jules Cohn/Robert Richman

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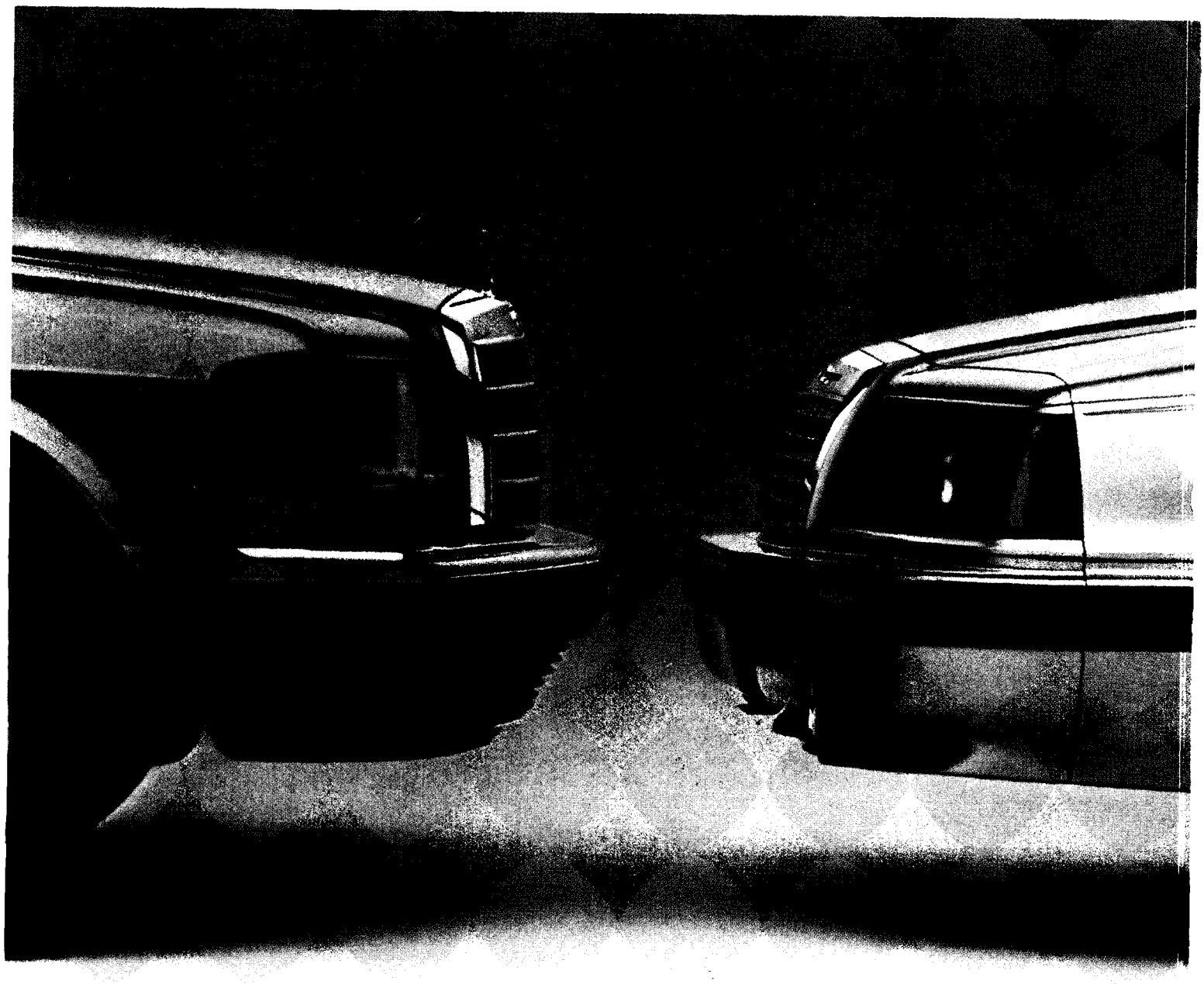

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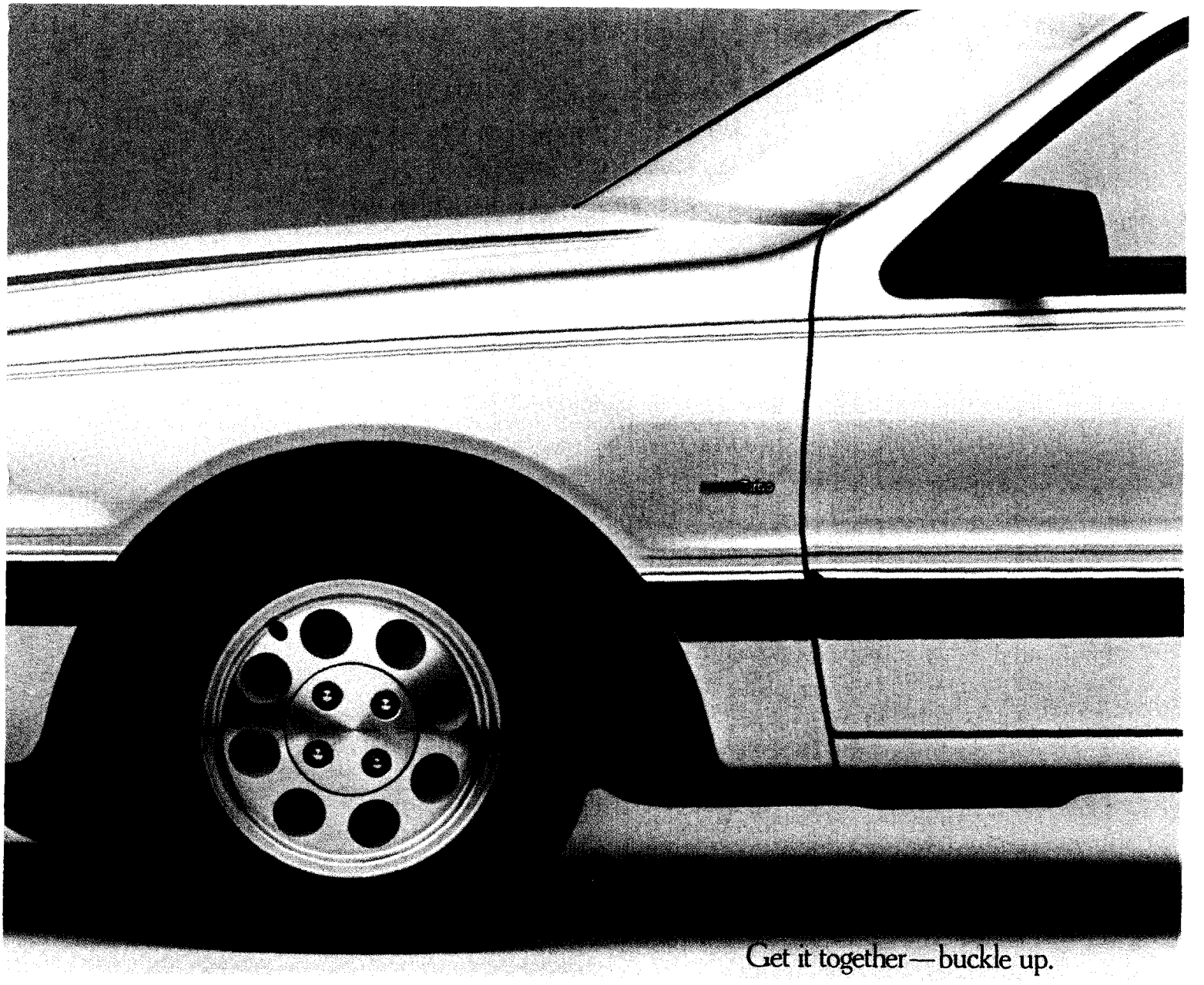

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Commentary

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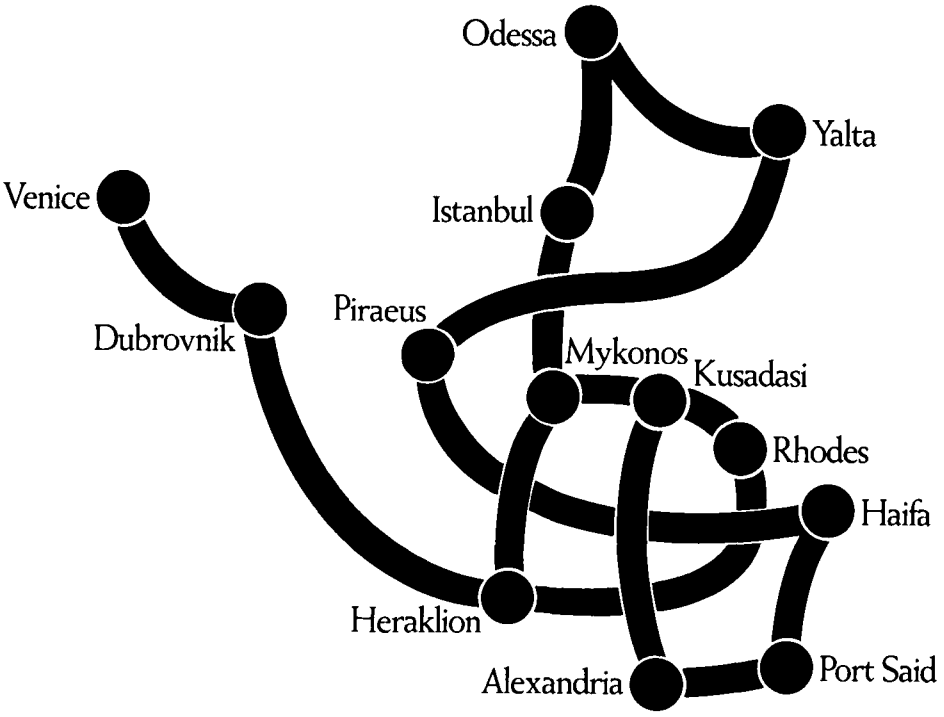

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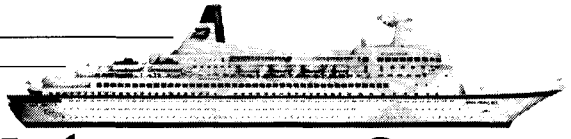

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Jewish Voters & the "Politics of Compassion"

Irving Kristol & Critics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Irving Kristol ["The Political Dilemma of American Jews," July] has summarized usefully a number of changes in the political complexion of this country, with particular reference to the traditional attitudes and roles played by Jews. He points out correctly that a dilemma is created by these changes. However, his advocacy of a set of shifts in point of view from those most characteristic of American Jews in the past is problematical, inconsistent, and ultimately depressing. He portrays a Jewish community whose value system should be largely determined by the criteria of expediency and self-interest, abandoning a model of interdependence and interrelationship within this country and internationally. I believe there are better alternatives for American Jews.

Mr. Kristol begins by assessing the impact of the Jesse Jackson candidacy. While it is true that Jesse Jackson's candidacy has introduced substantive change into black-Jewish relationships, I believe it to be an overstatement to say that "the long alliance between Jewish and black organizations is coming apart." Though the Jackson-Farrakhan fiasco has disturbed virtually all thinking Jews, there are heartening indications both in the black community and among those close to the black community, ranging from the NAACP and the *Amsterdam News* to elements of the Black Muslim movement, that black separatism is not the way, that anti-Semitism must be rejected, and that what is needed is a renewed effort to build the black-Jewish alliance, perhaps requiring readjustment on both sides. Believing, as he and I both do, that black-Jewish polarization is "almost too scary to contemplate," I would expect Mr. Kristol to agree that now is the time to affirm the common black-Jewish agenda and to deal realistically with those areas in which we simply must agree to disagree.

Many in the black community and outside it recognize that the failure on the part of a large number of blacks to move up the socio-economic ladder more quickly is the result of both internal and external causes: social disorganization and family demoralization within the community as well as racial discrimination from outside it. Nevertheless, Mr. Kristol's perception of social-welfare programs as the villain makes one shudder. He writes that providing free lunches for poor schoolchildren is "nice," and "unquestionably nice for the nutritionists, the food-service industry, and the farmers." So much for the traditional Jewish value of feeding the hungry! But beyond that, he suggests that the fact that the social and individual pathologies in the black family "parallel so neatly . . . the institution of all those social programs" gives us "good reason to think that the Great Society programs themselves had something to do with this social disorganization and individual demoralization." Why not follow the same reasoning with regard to the half of the black population whose condition, by Mr. Kristol's own admission, has dramatically improved over the last decades? *Their* climb up the socio-economic ladder also neatly parallels the institution of those very same social programs. Why not concede the possibility that those programs contributed to effecting that climb?

Regarding the Moral Majority, there is a peculiar confusion of expediency and principle in Mr. Kristol's assertions. He suggests that American Jews need to "revise their thinking" on a range of social issues "for reasons of expediency" so as to insure the support of Israel by the Moral Majority. It may very well be that Jews should reconsider their positions on some of those issues on their merits. Pornography may be a case in point. But this does not appear to be Mr. Kristol's argument. He advocates, somewhat cynically, abandoning our traditional concerns (adhered to because we are "enmeshed in the liberal time warp") and supporting Moral Majority positions on some social issues in part because their efforts in these areas are "meeting with practically no success" so there is not much risk in lending Jewish support to them!

My position on church-state issues and on other such ethical issues as abortion and school prayer is based on a conviction concerning the separation of church and state and an assertion of freedom of conscience and individual rights which ought not to be sacrificed on the altar of expediency. It is simply not true that American Jews don't want Christians to become more Christian. They simply wish to maintain a free America, rather than a Christian America, in which Jews are tolerated guests. To Mr. Kristol's question, "Why should there be a Hanukkah candelabrum at Central Park... but no crèche?," my answer is that there should be neither. The Moral Majority's support for Israel is welcome, but it is primarily the product of the very "theological abstractions" that Mr. Kristol dismisses so cavalierly. It is not offered as a *quid pro quo* for Jewish abandonment of positions held as a matter of philosophical and ideological conviction.

Regarding Mr. Kristol's observations on American foreign policy, his analysis implies that there are only two choices: either we accept the fact that "the real world" is "rife with conflict and savagery" and therefore we ought to support "a large and powerful military establishment that can, if necessary, fight and win dirty, little wars (or not so little ones) in faraway places"; or force our country to retreat into a "quasi-isolationism that leaves our moral purity undefiled and the world to its own devices."

Whether or not a third choice is proposed in the policies and platform of either of our national parties, many of us would choose to

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affirm a third position: a strong America which spends its resources wisely for an appropriate level of military strength and allocates adequate resources to social programs; a foreign policy which is unembarrassed in articulating and asserting our positions but seeks agreements with adversaries for reasons of mutual self-interest; an America which chooses appropriate arenas in which to take its stand and deals realistically with the need to make choices as to where to invest military strength and where alternative methods of dispute settlement must be pursued.

My vision of America is very different from that of Mr. Kristol. I continue to assert the possibility of developing relationships with other groups based on a willingness to reaffirm the values which have shaped us as Jews and as Americans. I have confidence in continued American support for Israel based on a wide consensus concerning the ties that bind the two countries, their common allegiance to a free society, and the recognition of mutual interests served by those ties. I do not believe in friendship and support acquired by abandoning principle, and I continue to feel that our country's strength rests ultimately on its rooting of its military and economic might in the soil of compassion.

DAVID GORDIS
Executive Vice President
American Jewish Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol has ably cast the terms of some important national debates in his article, "The Political Dilemma of American Jews." I would like to comment on just one of those issues—civil rights.

In noting that the civil-rights movement has been "victorious," Mr. Kristol states that "What are now called civil-rights issues are marginal legal quarrels. . . ." I am inclined to think such a description is belied by Mr. Kristol's recognition that affirmative action, regrettably, is a concept notable for its historical (and, by the way, judicial) lack of clarity. While it has truly been said that ambiguity is often a healthy sign of the give-and-take of democracy, in this case the ambiguity is less than democratic in its effect. Jews are not alone in asking whether affirmative action really amounts to a system of reverse discrimination or quotas, and if so, in resisting it—but even while resisting it preferring rather confusedly to insist on "affirmative action." Unhappily, matters are not clarified by the use of "goals and timetables," which in practice have been indistinguishable from quotas. Such goals, when used to accord a selection preference rather than simply as a recruiting measurement tool, are no less exclusionary than quotas.

Far from constituting a minor legal quarrel, civil rights, while formally victorious in the political arena, are substantively in a rather desultory state. In fact, there is a real danger that the original goal of the civil-rights movement—to eradicate wrongful discrimination—may be undone by the bitterness and confusion spawned by the new notion of civil rights.

That is, the civil-rights movement, having been turned around 180 degrees, nowadays is concerned less with traditional civil rights—which long have been thought to inhere in individuals—than with group rights and the statistically or politically defined results following from such rights. So considered, the civil-rights movement, one of our country's proudest and still unfinished accomplishments, has turned into a civil-rights agenda for which the bottom line is political partisanship rather than due process. Not the rights of citizenship but the meanderings of sociology now seem to be its primary concern. The older concept of equal opportunity is looked down on as inferior to affirmative action.

In this respect, Jesse Jackson is not so anomalous. In his promulgation of a political agenda under the rubric of civil rights, the Reverend Jackson is following the drift of the civil-rights movement over the last fifteen years or so. Both quotas and the "black nationalism" that Mr. Kristol attributes to Jesse Jackson demand a new kind of separate-but-equal treatment—and both in the name of civil rights. This is irony indeed.

While one can expect that such remarks as these will be a "hard saying" to many sincere people who feel strongly about civil rights, I nevertheless think Mr. Kristol will agree with me in stating matters thusly. For our nation, and each minority group within it, is ill-served by an expansive and unwarranted notion of group rights, and by the use of racism to whittle down the effects of racism. Quotas,

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of course, no matter what name they go by, are an attempt to do just that.

Irving Kristol has produced a most perceptive and timely article. If the issues he raises are debated fairly and honestly by policy-makers and private citizens alike, our country may yet shed its current factionalism and strengthen a fading consensus on civil rights. An alliance among all Americans, including the sadly troubled one between Jews and blacks, can only thereby be forged.

WILLIAM BRADFORD REYNOLDS
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am among those who share the profound concerns expressed in Irving Kristol's article, and I congratulate him and thank COMMENTARY for publishing his lucid and penetrating statement. That it is so insightful an exposition makes it also a little frightening—because it raises the question of how many of us can summon up sufficient detachment from the past to examine the evidence and weigh it objectively.

My experience in the Anti-Defamation League made me both participant and witness to some of the "disorientation . . . causing uneasiness and discomfort" in the Jewish political consciousness, in view of fundamental changes in our social and political ambience. At the same time, however, there have been a few notable signs of the kind of candid confrontation with reality for which Mr. Kristol calls. For example, ADL's National Executive Committee, meeting in Dallas in 1980, reviewed the parade of anti-democratic and anti-Israel actions at the United Nations. We regretfully pointed out that the UN was evolving into "a center of anti-American activity"; we called upon the U.S. to make selective budget cuts in its UN allocation so long as the world body continued to work against American interests.

Our resolution also empowered the officers and administration of the League to initiate an educational campaign which afterward produced, among other things, the agency's series of full-page newspaper ads alerting the public to the UN's evils. (I might note that, on another front, this same 1980 ADL meeting called for increased efforts to block "quotas or systems of racial preference," despite the Supreme Court decision in the *Fullilove* case.)

So you see, not "all [of] the Jewish organizations have lost their tongues"; after the League had publicized its position, many spoke out against the excesses at the UN (and reaffirmed their stand against distortions of affirmative action).

Mr. Kristol's article is a necessary catalyst. In any event, his insights may help dispel some of our "nostalgia" for past political perceptions and emotional commitments to specific causes, when present-day realities point toward reexamination and possible change.

MAXWELL E. GREENBERG
Honorary Chairman
Anti-Defamation League of
B'nai B'rith
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's animadversions against the "liberal time warp" and "some Jews" who are "enmeshed" in it and whom he admonishes to realize "how wrong they are," provide the answer to his question, "So what went wrong? Where did Jesse Jackson come from, and why?" Jackson is the expression of the "liberal time warp"; he gives voice to the "frustration of the black ghetto" (and its anger) at those whites who, as blacks perceive it, have reneged on the commitment to racial equality by opposing the enforcement of affirmative action through numerical quotas that provide proof of effectiveness. Without quotas for college and university admissions, hiring, and promotions, affirmative action would remain a mere slogan. Nathan Glazer's reference to affirmative action as "affirmative discrimination" and the vocal Jewish opposition to quotas are the principal reasons for the breakdown of black-Jewish relations.

Mr. Kristol thinks affirmative action means "encouraging minorities." But encouragement is not enough to secure the job rights and the right to advancement of blacks and women. To overcome, they need "positive discrimination." That encouragement of the poor is not enough is a basic insight of the traditional Jewish interpretation of human rights. . . . Widows and orphans and the poor are subjects of "positive discrimination" in Jewish social law, which demands not charity but *tzedakah* ("justice"); that is, compensation for the poverty caused by ill-fortune or the lack of the ability to compete in the marketplace. Jewish tradition is committed to the Great Society and to Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, especially "Freedom from Want."

Providing free school lunches for poor schoolchildren is not merely "nice . . . and unquestionably nice for the nutritionists, the food-service industry, and the farmers," as Mr. Kristol sarcastically writes. School lunches are a *necessity*, for there is hunger in this country. Mr. Kristol wrongly concludes that "the social disorganization and individual demoralization within the black ghettos have overwhelmed whatever positive effects those social programs were expected to have, or even might have had." There are many positive effects—but not enough. Teenage drug addiction and sexual promiscuity are also scourges of prosperous white neighborhoods. But when children of prosperous white parents get into "trouble," there is money for therapy and abortions. Also, the teenage daughters of prosperous white parents usually have access to birth control, which black teenagers lack. Social workers know that white teenagers are as sexually (and promiscuously) active as are their peers in the ghettos, nor are they immune from becoming hooked on drugs.

Violence and pornography, on the screen, on television, and in magazines and books—and the chic of sexual permissiveness—are the cancer causing the "demoralization" that destroys family values....

Mr. Kristol's notion that social programs for blacks have been responsible for "dependency"—an "absolute dependency" that corrupts (like power and absolute power corrupt), is an insult infinitely more hurtful than Jesse Jackson's reference to Jews and New York as "Hymies" and "Hymietown."

If "the long alliance between Jewish and black organizations is coming apart," it is because those for whom Mr. Kristol speaks think that encouragement of blacks (and women) is enough. But blacks (and women) *know* that encouragement is tokenism. The "misery and poverty" of blacks can be overcome only through affirmative *action*, tied to quotas, and with more economic help.

It took Moses forty years, according to the Bible, to raise a generation not born in slavery and thus

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ready for settling in the Promised Land. And then it took another seven hundred years, the teachings of the Prophets, and the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the Babylonian exile to uproot the pagan cults from Judah. Mr. Kristol should know that in the short span of twenty years blacks have done better through self-help than anyone could have a right to expect.

Unlike Mr. Kristol, I do not foresee a "black-Jewish polarization almost too scary to contemplate." I believe that, contrary to his advice, Jewish organizations will *return* to the *traditional* Jewish pattern of the "liberal time warp," . . . which comprises Jewish ethics and culture.

The Moral Majority's support for Israel is part of the apocalyptic expectations of evangelical Christians who hope for the return of Jesus at the beginning of the new millennium. Since the return of the Jews to the Promised Land must precede the second coming of Jesus, Jerry Falwell and other evangelical leaders are pro-Israel. . . . Israel welcomes Evangelical Congresses and is "polite" (but not more than that) to the leadership of the Moral Majority. But Mr. Kristol's notion that "the support of the Moral Majority could, in the near future, turn out to be decisive for the very existence of the Jewish state" is unrealistic. He is right, however, in deploring the misguided court actions of Jewish defense agencies which misinterpret the doctrine of the separation of church and state and oppose cultural pluralism when they bring court actions against Christmas crèches in public places. . . .

The influence of the U.S., together with the influence of the European nations who founded the United Nations in 1945, is "rapidly disintegrating," but not for the reasons Mr. Kristol cites. U.S. clout in the UN is virtually nil because the 23 industrial democracies in the UN are overwhelmingly outnumbered by 133 UN members representing the Communist states (18) and the developing countries in Africa (46), Asia, (20), Latin America (31), and the Arab states (18). The UN has deteriorated into a lackluster debating society without power. Regardless of who represents the U.S. in the UN, our country will be outvoted by the 133 UN member-nations who regard the U.S. as their enemy. As for Israel, it is now attempting to reestablish relations with Third World African nations that were broken and/or deteriorated after the Six-Day War in 1967.

Mr. Kristol's apprehension that Jesse Jackson and the black caucus will advocate the allocation of funds now spent for military and economic aid for Israel to social programs in the ghettos is unwarranted. He should *know* that the U.S. foreign-aid program is designed to serve American interests . . . and U.S. support for Israel (and other countries) will continue as long as it serves these interests.

One need not deplore the disappearance of "Jewish unions." Jews are the most mobile socioeconomic group in the U.S. As a result, Mr. Kristol correctly states, the membership of yesteryear's "Jewish unions" is now black, Hispanic, and Oriental. It is natural, therefore, that the leadership of these unions represents the members. Nor is it a calamity that the unions are developing closer political ties to the Democratic party. The "Jewish unions," in their heyday, voted for the Democratic party; they were not merely "liberal" but "socialist" and passionately involved in socialist-liberal politics.

Sympathy for the Palestinians, which Mr. Kristol disparages, is not necessarily tied to blindness to Israel's virtues. In his day, Martin Buber was among the most vociferous advocates of national rights for Palestinian Arabs, and today some of Israel's most seminal minds and most influential writers including Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, oppose Likud policies on the West Bank and in Gaza.

For Mr. Kristol, "liberalism" is synonymous with "evil" and fraught with mortal danger for American Jews and for Israel. He holds, wrongly, that American Jews have a "political dilemma," and claims, quoting Erik Erikson, that Jews need a new ideological orientation. But the quotation from Erikson refers to an individual and should not be applied, as Mr. Kristol applies it, to ethnic, national, and religious groups.

With respect to American Jews, Mr. Kristol's advice is fraught with the very dire consequences he thinks can be averted by the rejection of the *traditional* (in terms of Jewish culture and political affiliation in this and other countries) Jewish commitment to liberalism. Opposing affirmative-action quotas and advocating the ending or cutting back of social programs for the poor, especially poor blacks, will intensify the black-Jewish confrontation instead of healing the wounds and the rift.

Supporting the Moral Majority, which is, in fact, an insignificant minority in Christendom, will stamp American Jews with the stigma of the Reverend Jerry Falwell's policies.

American Jews must recognize that the wave of the future is the growth of "black power" and the coming into their own of the developing countries of the Third World.

The political landscape of our planet has changed. This is why the "ideological obstinacy," of which Mr. Kristol accuses Jews and Jewish organizations who are liberal, is in fact the obstinacy of the conservatives, old and new, who in ostrich-like fashion bury their heads in the sand of a conservative ideology that will be swept away by the *new* powers which have adopted the Jewish imperative: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land" (Leviticus 25:10).

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN
Editor, *Jewish Spectator*
Santa Monica, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The July issue contains two articles, one by Sidney Hook ["Education in Defense of a Free Society"] and the other by Irving Kristol, that suggest opposite courses of action when facing a conflict between principles and expediency.

Mr. Hook calls on us to uphold our "faith and belief in the principles of liberal democracy," whereas Mr. Kristol is prepared to abandon them in favor of "a purely expediential point of view."

I have long admired Irving Kristol's clarity of perception, never more so than when he has written on the situation we face in the Middle East, and I am not quarreling here with his excellent analysis of the dilemmas facing American Jews in their historic support for the civil-rights movement and the United Nations. With regard to the first of these dilemmas, why not use our talents and resources to alert the leaders and members of the NAACP, the Urban League, and other organizations in the black community as to how Jesse Jackson's activities can undermine and ultimately destroy the civil-rights movement? As for the United Na-

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tions, it appears to be beyond redemption.

Senator Jesse Helms and the Moral Majority in the Republican party are similar in their influence on the Right to Jesse Jackson's influence on the Left. But Mr. Kristol has chosen to harness the Democratic party with its albatross while assuming that the Republican party is immune. His veering to the Right removes a gifted voice from the democratic Center and helps to turn the battle into a contest between the extremes in our society.

GEORGE FIELD
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's "The Political Dilemma of American Jews" is a bizarre mix of fact and fantasy, united only by his assertion that we Jews must line up with the Right. But, for openers, his fundamental assumption is factually wrong. It is absolutely untrue that America's Jews are looking for "a more explicit and meaningful Jewish identity and have been moving away from universalist secular humanism." The majority of Jews are unaffiliated with any Jewish organization, religious or otherwise. This is particularly true of the educated youth, as the intermarriage rate, among other statistics, clearly testifies. And when Mr. Kristol tells us that Israel's interests require us to line up with Reagan on Central America, and all his future "dirty, little (or not so little) wars," he conveniently ignores the reality that the majority of U.S. Jews do not care enough about Israel to donate a single penny to the Zionist coffers.

However, on some points he is correct. If you do line up with Israel, then A is always followed by B, and it's true that the inexorable requirements of the worldwide anti-Soviet struggle now being waged by both the U.S. and Israel would, logically, compel Zionists to "take [their] allies where and how [they] find them . . . even if they are totalitarians (e.g., China)." But it is ludicrous to think, for example, that Hadassah members will ever see themselves as allied to the Chinese Communist party. And if it is also true that Israel has yoked itself to the fortunes of Central America's juntas, and that their inevitable defeat will be Zionism's disaster, it is equally absurd to think that the vast majority of the sons and daughters of those Hadassah members will ever support U.S. intervention in the region.

Mr. Kristol is one of the *minority* of Jews who have checked out of the humanist camp, and have bought into what they are pleased to style "Jewish identity." Except that he seems to believe that Isaiah was a member of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Board of Contributors and a registered Republican. And then this self-certified Jew would tie us to the Moral Majority—whom he knows believes the return of the Jews to their land is the prerequisite for the second coming of Jesus. He snickers at the fundamentalists for this, but tells us to abandon two centuries of the Enlightenment, i.e., James Madison's First Amendment, with its separation of church and state, not only in Israel's expedient interest but—get this!—because we are allegedly becoming *more* Jewish and, precisely because we are becoming more Jewish, we must learn to "exist comfortably" with Christian crèches in Central Park, as a *quid pro quo* to Jerry Falwell & Co. for their support for arms to Israel.

An alliance with Chinese Stalinism and an indifference to Christian crèches in our parks—all in the name of Israel and Jewish identity—and all this in one article, may constitute an unbreakable world record for Newspeak. But why not? After all, this is 1984, isn't it?

LENNI BRENNER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Irving Kristol maintains that American Jews, and liberals in general, must rethink their political positions and return to the mindset that preceded the social shift to the Left that occurred during the 60's and early 70's. But his argument begins to falter when he says that since some black schoolchildren take drugs and steal while availing themselves of government-supported lunch programs . . ., the positive effects of alleviating hunger are nullified; he implies that the government should not be giving lunch to poor children. But I have not heard Mr. Kristol use the same argument against the defense contractor who devises ways to sell the Army hammers at $200 apiece over a taxpayer-subsidized three-martini lunch. . . . As we have already seen, it is easier to bring the budget axe down on schoolchildren than on the taxpayer-subsidized lunch of the business executive. Mr. Kristol's contention that "disorganization and demoralization" have overwhelmed the benefits derived from these social programs ignores the very real fact that, the attempts of the Reagan administration notwithstanding, schoolchildren in America are not going hungry.

Mr. Kristol admonishes Jews to rethink their opposition to the Moral Majority and other fundamentalist religious groups. He uses the argument that since the Moral Majority is pro-Israel, it should be supported by American Jews. In connection with the conduct of American foreign policy, this same argument is used by those who say the United States should support any and all Third World dictators who eschew Communism, even though their value systems run contrary to almost everything America stands for. The fact is that the Moral Majority supports the state of Israel . . . because of its role as the only anti-Communist democracy in that region of the world. This support is given on a purely ideological basis, akin to U.S. right-wing support for Roberto D'Aubuisson, and it does not preclude the fundamentalists from espousing policies (school prayer, etc.) that are clearly anathema to most American Jews in their historic battle against oppression and repression. It is potentially dangerous for the long-term interests of Jews and of Israel to fail to separate political support for the state of Israel from policies that are clearly at odds with Judaism and American Jews in particular. . . .

If the existence of Israel hinges on the support of Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority, as Mr. Kristol asserts, then clearly Israel and its "secular humanist" allies in this country have reached a moral crisis that is beyond any military or political solution. . . . One has only to look at the carnage inflicted by militant religious movements in the Muslim world to understand the dangers of combining church and state. The framers of our Constitution had a clear vision. I cannot say the same for Mr. Kristol and others in the conservative movement.

In talking about military intervention, Mr. Kristol seems to equate moral support for Israel with the need for military support of Third World anti-Communist dictatorships. To fail to understand the dif-

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ference between U.S. support for Israel and current U.S. policy in Central America is once again to boil world conflicts down to simple East-vs.-West military non-solutions, which have failed miserably in the past.

To use the failures of the liberal state as a justification for a realignment of liberal and Jewish attitudes today is to risk throwing the baby out with the bath water. It is true that, for better or worse, the political tide has shifted to the Right in this country, but the political winds that were blowing so heavily in 1979 and 1980 have begun to swing back to the Center, as evidenced by the lack of support for many Reagan policies and in the congressional elections of 1982. It is now time to improve on many of the well-intentioned but in some cases misguided policies of the past, and make them work for everyone, not discard them for the sake of perceived political convenience.

LARRY MOSCOW
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's article is interesting and provocative, but in his eagerness to chastise American Jews into a full-fledged alliance with the Republican party and the forces of the Right, he oversimplifies and at times distorts a complex situation.

The real challenge confronting American Jews today is to shed the standard labels and to recast themselves politically in the mold of the late Senator Henry M. Jackson. That is, the Jewish community must come to grips with the severity of the threat to U.S. interests and to those of Israel posed by Soviet militarism, expansionism, and anti-Semitism *without* forsaking such liberal principles as a genuine concern for the poor, a staunch opposition to bigotry, a commitment to protect our environment, and insistence on complete legal equality for women.

To maximize their sway and their constructive input within the current political environment—assuming a secure Israel to be the top but by no means the sole political priority for Jewish Americans—some Jews should be Democrats, some should be Republicans, and most should be what might be termed unaffiliated, enlightened progressives. Candidates of both parties should be judged on their overall merits, but should continue to be made to feel as if their stance on Israel is a matter of significance for their electoral chances. Those who support Israel primarily as a strategic ally (or as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy) are no less *but certainly no more* valuable and necessary than those who stress a U.S.-Israel community of values and America's obligation to help sustain an embattled democracy. And since many who back an American defense build-up nonetheless promote an anti-Israel Middle East policy, Jews need to examine carefully even those candidates who correctly advocate a forthright American response to Soviet imperialism.

Alliances of convenience, about which there is nothing inherently evil, are a common feature of Amer-

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ican political life. The Moral Majority's support for a strong Israel should of course be encouraged rather than rejected. But let us not be under any illusions. Israel is *not* a core issue for fundamentalist reactionaries. For many of them, the number-one hero in Congress is Senator Jesse Helms, whose hatred for . . . Israel is just as fervent and just as repugnant as Jesse Jackson's. To ally in a broad political sense with such people would be both self-abnegating and extremely imprudent. It would require an utter abandonment of traditional Jewish humanism, bringing negligible gains and immeasurable losses. Being transparently unfaithful to their ideals, Jews would lose respect (including self-respect) across the political spectrum and would forfeit all influence over the direction of the Democratic party, with all the potentially disastrous consequences that would attend such an eventuality.

In fact, contrary to what Mr. Kristol would have us believe, Jesse Jackson has *not* yet won a controlling voice over Democratic Middle East policy, and friends of Israel and the free world most emphatically should *not* yield it to him without a fight. Mr. Kristol's thinly veiled proposition that Reagan's reelection would be preferable to a Mondale victory from the pro-Israel vantage point ("can anyone doubt that, under a Mondale . . . Presidency, our next ambassador to the UN will be more like Andrew Young than Jeane Kirkpatrick?") is highly dubious at best. After all, it is Reagan who in essence accused Jews of lacking patriotism during the AWACS struggle; it is Reagan who insists, against the express wishes of clear majorities in both houses of Congress, that Israel remain the only country in the world in which an American embassy is situated outside the designated capital city; and it is the "tough" Reagan administration, as Michael Ledeen argues so effectively in the May COMMENTARY ["The Lesson of Lebanon"], that conducted a ridiculously weak and inept Lebanon policy in 1982-83 to the great detriment of both Israel and the United States.

Like Reagan, Mondale clearly understands the need for American power as a force for world peace, and his record on Israel is far less ambiguous. (Henry Jackson, I am confident, would have endorsed the former Vice President without equivocation. . . .) I, for one, see Mondale as a much better bet both for Israel *and* for the kind of American society that Jews have historically and properly striven for.

WILLIAM TILCHIN
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The recently concluded Democratic national convention, which I assume represents liberalism in America, was certainly not a surrender to the elements that both Irving Kristol and those of us who call ourselves "liberal" would consider hostile to American Jewry. The platform adopted by the Democrats speaks out quite strongly on behalf of Israel and Soviet Jewry. I would remind Mr. Kristol that a plank that called for the recognition of the PLO was overwhelmingly defeated in the platform committee and was never even brought to the floor for debate.

There was certainly no hesitation either on the part of Jewish organizations or concerned leadership in the Democratic party in condemning the anti-Semitism of a few during the primary season. It should be noted that many black leaders joined in that condemnation.

Now, to examine the concern for Israel's safety as evidenced by the Moral Majority and the New Right. Since actions speak louder than words, the sale of the AWACS and other sophisticated weaponry to Saudi Arabia can be used as the prime example of this concern or lack of same. It was the Senators elected with the support of the Moral Majority who voted for the sale while liberal Democratic and Republican Senators opposed it. It was the Reagan administration that told American Jews during the debate on the sale that we had to choose between "Reagan and Begin" and called our patriotism into question on a level not seen in this country in many years. I also remind Mr. Kristol that to many born-again Christians Israel and Judaism merely represent a step on the way to Christianity.

Mr. Kristol also questions the attachment of Jews to a strict interpretation of the Constitution in relation to the separation of church and state. He presents it as an outdated concept, an "opinion of yesteryear." But it is that separation which protects American Jews who want to reach toward the more meaningful Jewish identity to which Mr. Kristol refers. How long would we survive in a "Christian" America?

Mr. Kristol speaks of *Realpolitik* in regard to the United Nations and to United States relations with the rest of the world. I would be the last person to defend the UN, but let me point out that Israel still finds it in its interest to remain a member. I raise one final question about Mr. Kristol's interpretation of real-world politics: why is it not possible for a world power such as the United States to pick and choose its global obligations and not merely support dictatorships because they claim to fly the flag of anti-Communism? . . .

ARNOLD I. LINHARDT
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Curiously enough, Irving Kristol's observations on black-Jewish relations echo the very arguments which he so skillfully disposes of. Both he and the liberal intelligentsia seem to agree that Jesse Jackson reflects the opinions of black Americans, to one degree or another. . . . True, black support for Jackson during the primary campaign was overwhelming, but that support did not translate into an endorsement of his policies. The most recent public-opinion polls show that blacks prefer Mondale to Jackson as President, that a majority of blacks support a strong national defense, and that blacks are generally more supportive of Israel than whites. Despite disagreements on such issues as quotas, the civil-rights agenda still revolves around questions of unemployment, housing, health care, and education: issues on which blacks and Jews remain united. Jesse Jackson may fulminate hysterically, but there were more black Mondale delegates than Jackson delegates at San Francisco this summer. The best way to fight Jackson is to deny him the recognition he so desperately seeks. Mr. Kristol's philosophy of doom merely serves to clothe the naked emperor created by the media.

The same, I might add, applies to Mr. Kristol's view of the American labor movement. Lane Kirkland and Albert Shanker are far from gone. They are in their political prime, as it were, along with scores of other labor leaders, black and white, Jew and Gentile, whose commitment to Israel, national defense, and the democratic idea in general is as strong as ever. The AFL-CIO's involvement in Demo-

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cratic party politics is a long overdue breath of fresh air, and may very well signal an ideological counteroffensive on the part of Henry Jackson liberalism.

The American Jewish community remains in the New Deal-civil-rights coalition because it must; because an administration which accommodates itself to Jaruzelski could just as easily accommodate itself to Arafat; because employees of the Bechtel corporation make very uncertain allies for Israel; because help from Christian fundamentalists remains suspect during a period of feverish proselytizing aimed at Jews in the U.S. and Israel; and because the ideals of equal opportunity and social justice are simply not worth abandoning when a few clouds appear on the political horizon. Jesse Jackson notwithstanding, some of us have chosen to stay and fight.

SAM SHUBE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a close follower of Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign and the ensuing blacks-vs.-Jews controversy, I thank Irving Kristol for continuing the discussion of this very important subject. I would, however, like to broaden the perspective and deepen the analysis.

The Jackson campaign is, at its core, anti-white rather than black nationalist or anti-Semitic. It seeks to place the blame for the failings of black Americans on the shoulders of white America, specifically, rich, white, male America. And the metaphor for rich, white, male America has become the Jew. . . .

However, I think Mr. Kristol exaggerates Jackson's personal power and his political importance in the black community. I believe that Jackson's and Farrakhan's rhetoric touches a deep-seated fear among *whites* that should the American economy collapse, violent racial conflict could develop in this country. For blacks, on the other hand, Jesse Jackson's comments about Jews are of secondary importance. Jackson is a symbol. . . . He has organized a national campaign; he is as effective and articulate a campaigner as are his Democratic rivals; and he has even upstaged the President of the United States with his international "diplomacy." He has astutely (though, in my opinion, unprincipledly) positioned himself so that any attack upon him, regardless of what he says, is by extension an attack upon black people in general.

I do not believe that mainstream blacks are anti-Semitic (although, as Jews, we must be aware that, according to Anti-Defamation League surveys, as blacks increase their educational level . . . their anti-Semitism increases rather than decreases). What blacks see is that Jesse Jackson is constantly being downgraded for his weaknesses rather than being congratulated for his strengths. They see this as yet another example of the way white people are always criticizing their behavior. . . .

Many blacks have become aware that whites are not the major cause of black people's misery, but cannot announce this publicly for fear of being called "self-hating blacks" by none other than Jackson and Farrakhan. . . . They are now sitting on the sidelines waiting to see how Jackson does. . . . I believe they will consider Jackson's rantings against the Jews and embracing of Farrakhan a mistake not to be repeated. . . .

We Jews must have enough courage to risk being labeled "racist" in order to warn America of the true nature of the evil which Jesse Jackson espouses. We must resist the temptation to view this situation as Jackson would have us see it: as a confrontation between blacks and Jews requiring Jews to reconsider their allegiance to the Democratic party.

LAWRENCE W. SCHONBRUNN
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What Irving Kristol has written in "The Political Dilemma of American Jews" is something I have sensed for some time. . . .

The term "liberal" is today nothing more than a hollow shell of its former principles. It has become a convenient cover for leftist ideology: a cover, because leftist ideology under its historic banner is still anathema in the United States. Yet Jews, as Mr. Kristol writes and as I have so uncomfortably observed, act as if nothing at all has changed. . . .

In this country the radicals have preempted the "liberal" label. Thus Jesse Jackson can, with impunity, align himself with the Third World and utter radical rhetoric condemning the United States and all that it stands for and still be admired by some for his candid views. . . .

Jackson and his supporters deeply resent the power ascribed to the "elite" Jewish minority. Theirs is a much larger community, with a potentially monolithic voting bloc. . . . The Democratic party, like any political party out of power, hungers to get "in." In order to assume power, it has to pander to that black vote. As for old-fashioned liberalism, too bad, but it's passé.

What Jews should do is swallow their lofty principles and seek, as Mr. Kristol advises, new alliances. While it may seem painful at first, in order to survive, one must learn to accommodate. . . .

ISIDORE CROSS
Waterbury, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Where has Irving Kristol been since 1972? In that year a large percentage of Jews voted for Nixon and the Republicans . . . and there has been a significant number of Jewish Republican voters in each subsequent election. More than that, Mr. Kristol should know that Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and New Hampshire have Republican (Jewish) Senators, and that Republicans recently ran a Jewish gubernatorial candidate in New York and a Jewish mayoral candidate in Chicago. Where has Mr. Kristol been hiding? There's a wide country beyond Manhattan's borders. . . .

As a Republican most of the time, and firmly so after the Democratic debacle of 1968, when leftists brought down Hubert Humphrey and campus intellectuals disdained the First Amendment and spat upon its supporters, I have more confidence in the national Republican party and its goals than I have in the Democratic party. I see no dilemma for American Jews . . . only a continued increase in Republican voters. . . .

EUGENE W. FELDMAN
Lewistown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol continues to educate me. It is only fitting that I thank him.

His article has answered questions that I have been wrestling with for several years. Why do American Jews—of all people—still cling to the Left? How can they square their support for the United Nations with their support for Israel? Why do they expect me to be *more* concerned about the oppression of Jews than of Christians in the Soviet Union? And lastly,

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don't they know who their real friends are? . . .

Whenever I ask these questions of a Left-leaning Jew, the answer invariably centers on fascism, Hitler, and the Holocaust. I am, of course, sensitive to these feelings, but the answer has never satisfied me—particularly in the face of the anti-Semitism so prevalent in Left totalitarian states. Now I understand, and, armed with this understanding, will try to be more charitable during these confrontations.

My only disagreement concerns Mr. Kristol's comment that Christian fundamentalist support for Israel will "die on the vine" unless it receives a positive response from the American Jewish community. I think the Moral Majority's support for Israel has little to do with the feelings of American Jews. Christian fundamentalists seem to regard Israel from a biblical or prophetic point of view, seeing it as the fulfillment of Scripture. That this view developed and exists without American Jewish support or encouragement causes me to believe that it will continue even if this support is not forthcoming. This is, of course, not to say such support would be unwelcome.

Perhaps true understanding will come via our religious values. As more American Jews rediscover their "Jewishness" and the meaning of their faith, they should recognize that they have more in common with the Christian than with the atheist or secular humanist.

DANA G. MCCARTHY
Chatham, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol speaks of the support for Israel by the Moral Majority as being unexpected and that American Jews would not have predicted it fifteen years earlier. If so, it is only because most Jews, including Mr. Kristol no doubt, have had little contact with fundamentalist Christians over the years.

I have run across such people, beginning with the Bible salesman whom I met on the ship returning from my first trip to Israel over thirty years ago. Through the years I have read fundamentalist tracts from time to time and met many fundamentalist Christians and have found universal support for Zionism and Israel among them. This support is more deep and lasting than that of liberal Gentiles, being based on certain religious beliefs which are as deep-rooted as my own Zionism. For this reason, it is probably completely unaffected by any attitudes American Jews may have for or against the Moral Majority.

MARSHALL GILLER
Grand Rapids, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Irving Kristol's brilliant essay, "The Political Dilemma of American Jews," is the most important, timely article COMMENTARY has ever published. And unless American Jews heed its message, their survival is in jeopardy.

If anti-Semitism is a moral failing, then the moral values of non-Jews can prevent anti-Semitism. Only by strengthening Christianity along with Judaism can America retain its tolerance of diverse religious cultures and the Judeo-Christian values that have preserved this great republic. The weakening of Christianity will serve only to lessen the respect for God in America, with a resulting increase in anti-Semitism and anti-Israel politics.

Never has this been more evident politically than in the Democratic party, a traditional Jewish stronghold. In order to appease Jesse Jackson, party leaders have refused to repudiate his racist demagoguery and Marxist-Leninist leanings. The end result, as Mr. Kristol notes, is the shift of the Democratic party to a radical Left-of-Center philosophy that can only weaken America's will to survive against our skillful Communist adversaries. . . .

But what of the question with which Irving Kristol concludes his article and which he leaves open-ended: will the conservative movement "be keenly enough interested in Jews to offer tolerable lodging to them?" The answer is an overwhelming Yes!

The evidence is abundant. The leading conservative journals—*National Review*, *Human Events*, and *Conservative Digest*—are staunchly Judeo-Christian, do not tolerate or publish any anti-Semitic or anti-black innuendo, are pro-Israel, and welcome Jewish support. The same attitude holds true for most of the major conservative opinion-molders. . . . It is obvious that any Republican politician who engaged in Jesse Jackson's rhetoric and conduct, denouncing America while standing on Communist soil, or promoting a Farrakhan at home, would be promptly repudiated and isolated from party policy-making. . . .

The Jewish community, in the face of Democratic tolerance of growing anti-Semitism in the party's left-wing, needs the conservative politics of the present Republican or possible future Populist party to preserve a climate in which Jews may flourish. And conservatives . . . need Jewish support morally, financially, in the public forums, and at the voting booths to help preserve a climate in which Christians may flourish.

The end result, if the Jewish community reevaluates itself in a timely manner, will produce a coalition to preserve our Judeo-Christian heritage and insure its security in a strong America. The alternative, as Irving Kristol realizes, is not pleasant to contemplate.

LEE DEEMER
Buffalo, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As expected, Irving Kristol trenchantly illuminates the national scene in his article, "The Political Dilemma of American Jews." Alas, there are some unsettling flaws in his argument. Here I want to concentrate only on his most egregiously false assumption, viz., that U.S. policy—at least when Republicans (i.e., conservatives) are in control, as is the case now with Ronald Reagan—flows from a devotion to . . . being "an active, great power in the world." Yet obviously nothing could be more off base.

The rhetoric of America since World War II has tended to obscure the alarming drift toward the sad reality of increasing bluster, diminishing bite. Let us analyze this remoreseless, unblinking geopolitical trend:

1. At Potsdam, Truman permitted good old "Uncle Joe" to plant his boots solidly over the whole of Eastern Europe.

2. Eisenhower was no bargain, either. During his tenure, Polish and Hungarian attempts to shake off their chains were disregarded. . . .

3. In Korea, Truman disdained MacArthur's advice that the U.S. should act like a great power, and Eisenhower ended up by giving the Communist world little but the back of our hand for its outrageous, murderous invasion of the "free world," in which fiasco so many American lives were lost and so much treasure squandered. Eisenhower blustered on to deny the British, French, and Israelis their proper right to repulse Nasser's seizure of one more vital Western position.

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4. America had a respite from the Republican interpretation of active, great-power globalism when Kennedy put his hand on the rudder and bungled Cuba, making a lamentable deal with Khrushchev, the end result of which was that Castro's tenure was solidly recognized and, little understood but far more worrisome, Soviet missile deployments went into place on rail tracks in the Cuban mountains, and pens for Soviet nuclear submarines are now ready and waiting in Cuban waters. . . .

5. . . . Lyndon Johnson did a Grenada *à la* Reagan in the Dominican Republic, brave posturer he, then squandered a sea of human lives—white, black, and yellow—in Indochina, declaring, by implication, that the peasant civilization of Vietnam was a threat to America but not the Chinese or Russian centers of power which were puppeteering safely from afar.

6. Next, that lifelong paragon of "anti-Communism," one Nixon by name, squandered still more human beings, widened the war to Cambodia (a "world-class" threat to the West), but again, like all postwar Presidents, lacked the guts to descry Moscow, Peking, or even Hanoi as the command centers of the pestilence.

Nixon went on to accept a SALT I treaty which dismantled our lone ABM defense, and which elsewhere enabled Russia the ten years it needed to consolidate as a superpower. . . . Nixon's pitiful, trembling posture was accentuated by Kissinger's denying Israel its rightful victory in 1973. . . .

7. In his brief moment in active power, Republican conservative Gerald Ford flew obediently to Vladivostok and then to Helsinki to capitulate further to Brezhnev.

8. Jimmy Carter's pusillanimous role in the face of affronts to the free world's power and prestige needs little comment, but his name will forever be distinguished in history for his speedy refusal to feed the Red hordes when they swept into Afghanistan. Bravo!

9. We now come to that centerpiece of conservative adoration, Ronald Reagan. First, to digress a moment from geopolitics: Reagan has so mismanaged the fiscal and budgetary policies of the U.S. that, in addition to all other consequences, the unbalanced budgets and high interest rates flowing therefrom are creating a thoroughly dangerous trade deficit which is reflected in our high structural unemployment and the growing redundancy and/or aging of America's productive facilities. We are becoming increasingly . . . a quasi-basket case, except in the subsidized food and armaments industries. All the euphemistic chatter about our becoming a "service economy" obscures the alarming dismantling of our smokestack sinews.

While squandering government (deficit) funds on a proliferating confusion of weapons systems lacking the essential ingredient of a unified, purposeful . . . defense or foreign policy, Reagan is engaged in a long-term make-work policy for America's armed forces by obstinately building up our only two potential enemies, Russia and so-called Communist China. This has been done through unobstructed, continuous technological transfers, only momentarily interrupted by occasional staged spectacular tantrums. . . .

We also feed the Red Army, Navy, Air Force, and the general population—despite 007, Afghanistan, Sakharov, Polish repression, worldwide KGB activity, SS-20's, and all that. Mr. Centerpiece inveighs against terrorism but has twice rescued the PLO from the jaws of defeat. Reagan hunkers down in Central America while the Soviets have their submarines aimed at the White House and Central Park, and their 700-"odd" SS-20's are pointed at the millennia-old centers of Western civilization.

I wonder what American Jews have to "shape up" to in this administration. I also wonder what Solzhenitsyn or Sakharov would say about Mr. Kristol's characterization of Reagan's America as "an active, great power in the world"? Somebody is sleepwalking into the 21st century—and I believe *they* would say, "It ain't Russia."

As a plain matter of fact, the Russian empire, a/k/a an "empire of evil," is alive and well and may even be living in Paris one of these days: because neither American leaders nor the American people are willing to come to grips with what it means to be "an active,

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great power in the world" at this juncture of history.

CARL HENRY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although I am generally impressed by the insight and honesty shown by Irving Kristol in "The Political Dilemma of American Jews," I find that at least some of his observations do not probe deeply enough. For example, in several passages he ascribes the predilection for the political Left on the part of many Jews to the influence of the Enlightenment. This explanation does not tell why Jewish liberals express opposition to capitalism and the principle of private property, both of which the Enlightenment generally upheld. Were the Jews who voted for George McGovern demonstrating their enthusiasm for the social economics of Adam Smith—or perhaps for the political theories of John Locke and James Madison? The question is obviously rhetorical, yet it is a suitable response to what for sociologists and historians has become a sacred truth: that Jewish radicalism reflects the Enlightenment's overpowering influence among educated Jews.

Mr. Kristol takes at face value what is perhaps another truism: that the concern of so many Jews and Jewish organizations for black civil rights was the natural response of a formerly oppressed group to the plight of another disadvantaged minority. Nonetheless, not all formerly oppressed groups, including Jews, have shown concern for all other groups that are victimized or disadvantaged. Armenians in America were not especially noticeable in their support for black civil rights, however grievously their kinsmen might have suffered under the Turks. Jews have not been as conspicuous in fighting American anti-Catholic bigotry (which, as Peter Viereck properly notes, remains the anti-Semitism of the American intelligentsia) as they have been in opposing anti-black and anti-feminist positions. . . .

There is no need to multiply these examples in order to prove the obvious. Jews, like most other groups, champion victimized people selectively. They often disregard the truly victimized (e.g., the fundamentalist educators in Nebraska who were jailed for exercising religious rights) while expressing sympathy for more dubious classes of victims—such as violent criminals and feminists raging over the persistence of sexual distinctions. It may be that Mr. Kristol has placed the cart before the horse. Jews do not support the Left because they sympathize with all suffering minorities. Rather, they support those alleged underdogs whom they see as victims of the Right. By championing embattled blacks, atheists, homosexuals, and feminists, Jewish liberals have tried to advance a secularist, egalitarian agenda. They have thus far succeeded in keeping other Jews behind them by appealing to the fear of Christian and right-wing anti-Semitism. This fear, as Mr. Kristol observes, is understandable in light of the historical past, although it has little to do with contemporary reality.

Like Mr. Kristol, I believe that the advancement of the Left-liberal agenda bodes ill for Jews even more than for most other Americans. Unlike him, I do not think the political self-delusion of American Jewry has resulted from either misguided good will or 18th-century political philosophy.

Mr. Kristol should not appear to be abandoning the moral high ground to those whom he criticizes by urging them to be less idealistic. It is he, not they, who is defending Judeo-Christian morality and civilization. The political dilemma that he analyzes has arisen mostly from anachronistic fears and hostilities, not from high-minded ideals.

PAUL GOTTFRIED
Editor, *Continuity*
Rockford, Illinois

IRVING KRISTOL writes:

Political discourse within the Jewish community—and especially liberal political discourse, which is the dominant version—has some very peculiar characteristics. It is more likely to resemble a sermon in its rhetoric than a conventional political statement. It tends to be abstractly universalistic and intensely moralistic, with a great stress on idealistic motivation. To refer to specifically "Jewish interests" is regarded as bad form, as are references to "expediency" or even "realism." In contrast, "compassion" is a term that is much used, with a highly laudatory connotation. To be accused of being "lacking in compassion" is to suffer a dismissal that is definitive. To be "lacking in compassion" is much, much worse than being wrong. Indeed, it is even worse than being right.

Now, compassion is indeed a virtue, much prized in the Jewish tradition. But it is worth recalling, as the etymology of the word itself indicates, that compassion is—a passion. It is one among several of our passions that can lead us to a virtuous life, the passion for justice being another. And all of these virtues are capable of being perverted when they are blind to the realities among which they operate. This is especially the case when these virtues are detached from the individual, to whom they properly belong, and are collectivized and politicized. We then have the "politics of compassion," which can be something very different from what "compassion" means in the Bible or the prayerbook. Just as a blind passion for justice, when politicized, can lead to an unjust political order, so can blind compassion, when translated into public policy, lead to equally disagreeable, unanticipated consequences.

It is not, as some say, that politics is inherently amoral. No human activity can be amoral. But in politics, morality lies in attentiveness to consequences, not in intention or motivation. An individual may receive a credit in heaven even if in a sincere, personal effort to perform a compassionate deed, he unwittingly creates a greater evil. God, who is infinitely compassionate, will forgive him. But political parties and governments have no standing in "the world to come." They can be judged only in instrumental terms, by the good or evil they actually produce. In politics, doing good is not necessarily the same thing as feeling good about what one is doing.

It is because of the profound intellectual confusion between the spheres of individual moral behavior and collective political action that Jewish political discourse seems to have such great difficulty in attaching itself to the realities of its environment. Take, for instance, the phenomenon of Jesse Jackson. He does not, one hears it said, truly express the sentiments of the majority of American blacks. He may indeed not, and one fervently hopes not. But he unquestionably expresses the sentiments of the majority of *politically active* blacks. At the Democratic convention, the Los Angeles *Times* did a comprehensive survey of all black delegates. Three-quarters of the

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Jackson delegates said they saw no reason to dissociate themselves publicly from Farrakhan's views. A near-majority of the black delegates committed to Walter Mondale said the same thing, while only a little more than a third demurred. And it is noticeable that, to this day, not a single one of the black moderate leaders, of the kind with whom Jewish organizations have had the most amiable relations, has been strongly critical of Jesse Jackson in public.

These same black moderate leaders, in private conversation, will assure their Jewish friends (and, more often than not, political allies) that Jackson is a transient political phenomenon, a comet across the political heavens that will soon burn itself out. And many Jewish leaders seem ready to accept such reassurances. After all, they point out, Jackson has not come up with a positive domestic program behind which the black community can rally.

But he has, only no one seems to have noticed. That program is racial quotas—a principle espoused by Jackson before he became a presidential candidate and which is now inscribed, however ambiguously, in the program of the Democratic party. What Jackson is saying is: never mind welfare (except as a temporary palliative), and never mind school lunches, and never mind all those other compassionate social programs that American liberals are so passionately devoted to. The solution which he offers to the problem of black poverty in the urban ghettos is proportional representation of blacks in employment, in both the public and private sectors.

A fantasy? Well, it is worth noting that one of the first actions of Mayor Tom Bradley—himself a moderate, certainly—when he returned to Los Angeles from the Democratic convention was to dismiss more than 100 appointed commissioners who oversee municipal agencies. Their replacements include 19 percent black, 16 percent Hispanic, 9 percent Asian, and 3 percent Indian. A carefully calculated "balance."

Our Jewish organizations have, so far as one can see, paid little attention to this new black political agenda. Nor have they bothered to give thought to the extraordinary fact that Jesse Jackson has been so utterly and consistently indifferent to the old black agenda—which was, and is, the liberal agenda.

Why is this? The answer is clear and simple, however unwelcome to some: that old agenda has lost its credibility because it has not worked. Something like half of American blacks have experienced significant upward economic mobility in the past two decades. That was what we expected to happen, since it has been happening to other poor Americans as well. But the other half of the black community has actually moved downward into worse squalor and poverty. That we did not expect, and cannot even explain—at least in terms of liberal social thinking. But Jesse Jackson understands it, and it is time the Jewish community made a serious effort to understand it, too.

The greatest single cause, by far, of black poverty is the increasing number of female-headed households in the ghettos. Why is the illegitimacy rate for black teenage girls so alarmingly high, when contraceptives and abortions are so easily available? Why is it that, after the majority of these young women get married—and the majority do get married by the time they are twenty-four—they are then abandoned by their husbands or divorce their husbands? Poor blacks have always been with us, but never before in American history has the poor black family suffered such devastation.

There is little doubt that it is our heedlessly constructed welfare system which has unwittingly created a set of perverse incentives for the proliferation of female-headed families as well as for the subsequent break-up of those families. Is it any wonder that so many blacks seem lacking in appreciation of that compassionate liberalism which has so savaged the black community?

The liberal reaction to Jesse Jackson shows that, nevertheless, liberals are desperately determined not to be dispossessed of one of their most precious commitments. Indulging their own need for moral self-gratification and self-congratulation, they vigorously resist any suggestion that they rethink their social policy, and insist that, since we have obviously not done enough to help poor blacks, we must do more of the same. They wish to continue doing bad, while continuing to feel good—all in the name of compassion.

Jesse Jackson, of course, as a black politician, is not about to do liberalism's rethinking for it. He has simply hurdled the whole issue with his emphasis on jobs—created by quotas. That the black community, and not only the black poor, should welcome this approach is hardly a cause for astonishment. It does offer them a way out of an ugly impasse. But this kind of "affirmative discrimination," on a broad scale, is surely not going to be acceptable to the majority of the American people. It is, equally surely, not acceptable to American Jews, who constitute less than 3 percent of the population. So one of the major links that held together the black-Jewish political coalition—agreement on the broad lines of social policy—is in the process of being severed.

THE second major link—black political support for Israel, in return for Jewish support of liberal social programs—is also in the process of suffering the same fate. It is not only that those traditional, liberal social programs are considerably less significant in the new black perspective. It is also the case that Jackson has evoked a spirit of black nationalism—sometimes distinguished only with difficulty from black racism—that has quickly come to dominate the black political activist community. And this must and will lead, is already leading, to a new black political posture vis-à-vis American foreign policy in general, and American policy toward Israel in particular.

Again, there is nothing really surprising about this development. American blacks, in addition to being Americans, are Afro-Americans. It is natural for them to have some sense of solidarity with blacks in Africa. And the black African nations are part of the Third World and most share a Third World ideology—share it with the Arab nations, most notably. This ideology is preeminently anti-Western ("anti-colonialist" is the favored term) in its political and social values, and consequently anti-Israel, since Israel is perceived (correctly) as an outpost of the West. It is also, of course, to one degree or another, anti-American, in the sense that it wishes to constrict, rather than expand, American power and influence in the world. These are the views of an Andrew Young as well as a Jesse Jackson, though Young expresses them with a prudent moderation.

Most American Jews perceive all this clearly enough. How could they not, when we have in the

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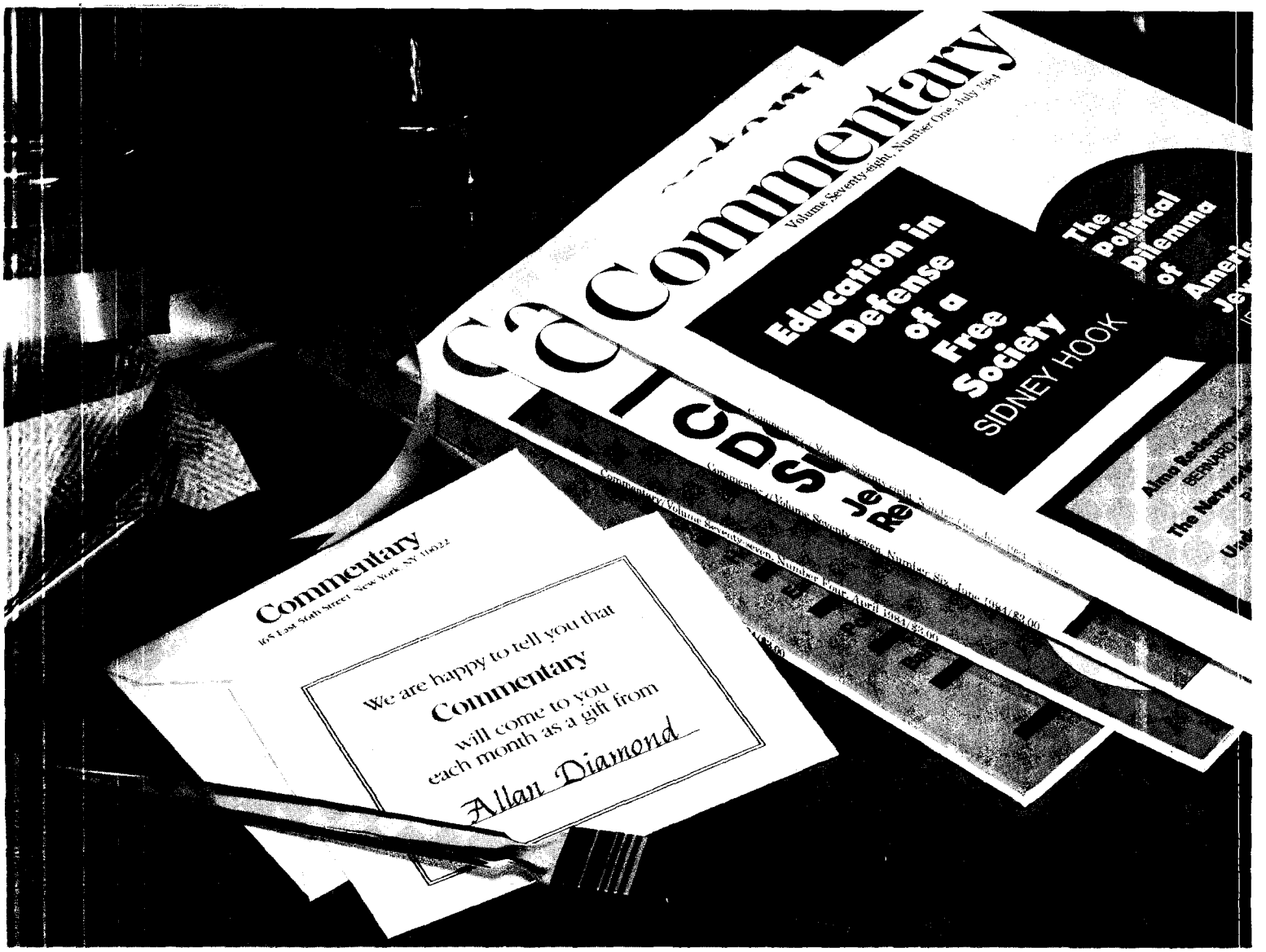
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Commentary

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United Nations a political theater where it is all so candidly expressed? But here too, many are inclined to believe—wish to believe—that the "politics of compassion" on an international scale will eventually achieve those same fine goals that have been hoped for on our domestic scene. In both cases, the experience of the past two decades reveals this to be a fantasy.

American influence in the world is only to a modest degree rooted in any appreciation the world might have for the moral quality of our public life or the moral intensity of our foreign policy. Admirable and ethically impeccable behavior, though always desirable, is not always possible for a great power enmeshed in the world's complexities, and in any case it is never enough. Influence in international affairs is inseparable from power, from military power specifically. After all, the Soviet Union is not a great and shaping power in the world because of its reputation for respecting human rights. The second most influential nation in the Western hemisphere is Cuba, not Canada, even though the latter is a much nicer country, one that even goes out of its way to show its respect for Third World sensibilities. And Israel survives, not only because it shares a democratic political ethos with other Western countries, but because it has been able to win wars.

We American Jews have, in addition to a normal American interest, a specifically "Jewish interest" in seeing to it that the United States is not merely a great democratic power, but the strongest and most influential of the great powers. For the United States is the only power in the world that is committed to Israel's survival. Never mind the reasons, which—thank goodness!—are not entirely altruistic, though they unquestionably have something to do with the common political values the two nations share. It is the fact that counts. And I do believe that all Jews realize—"feel it in their bones," as it were—that Israel in our time is "the saving remnant" of the Jewish people, and that should it fail to survive, the Jewish people as a collective entity would very likely disappear, gradually yet inevitably. It is all the more deplorable, therefore, that so many Jews in this country appear reluctant to face up to the brute fact that the standing of the United States in the world is organically connected to American military power and the willingness to use it when necessary.

What makes matters worse is that Jesse Jackson's views on foreign policy are congruent—not identical as yet, but clearly congruent—with the views of what may well be an emerging majority within the Democratic party. One has to put the matter so cautiously because the party right now is desperately trying to straddle the gap between its traditional liberal internationalism and the post-Vietnam surge of left-wing neo-isolationism, in which Third World themes are prominent. It remains to be seen which leg of that straddle will eventually give way.

BE THAT as it may, there would seem to be good reason to think that the long-standing political alliance between organizational leaders in the Jewish and black communities, created originally by the issue of equal civil rights for all Americans, is unraveling, and that the forces at work are too powerful to be reversed by soothing diplomacy.

At the same time, and rather to everyone's surprise, there has come on the scene a new group, an important conservative group loosely labeled the Moral Majority, which is not only vehemently pro-American but also pro-Israel. True, this group, being mainly fundamentalist Christian, is not exactly pro-Jewish. But then, no one ever believed that the majority of American blacks were pro-Jewish, either. And the fact that the Moral Majority is pro-Israel for theological reasons that flow from Christian belief is hardly a reason for Jews to distance themselves from it. Why would it be a problem for us? It is their theology, but it is our Israel.

One would think that Jewish leaders would be interested in exploring the possibility of some degree of cooperation with this group. But they shy nervously away from the prospect. This is not so much because the Moral Majority is Christian, as because it is conservative. (Jewish leaders, for years now, have found it possible to work with politically liberal Christians.) In other words, it is not Judaism or Christianity that causes Jews to keep a political distance from the Moral Majority, but the Jewish commitment to the secular, political religion—a fair description, I think—of the "politics of compassion," which the Moral Majority does not share. It is revealing to note that Orthodox Jews seem to have no such problem in establishing cordial, if less than completely harmonious, relations with the Moral Majority.

Yes, there are important issues that separate the Moral Majority from the majority of the Jewish community. But are they all nonnegotiable? Some may be (e.g., abortion). Others, in my opinion, ought not to be. One such issue is school prayer. When I attended the public schools of New York City, every weekly assembly was opened by the principal's reading of a Psalm while we stood in silent attention. It strikes me in retrospect as a pretty good way of instilling a minimum of reverence in young people for the religious roots of Western civilization. In addition, we all became familiar with the Psalms, which is a good thing in its own right.

The major problem here is that, while the Moral Majority may be insufficiently attentive to the separation of church and state, the Jewish community has been busy, over these last decades, in trying to erect a rigid wall of separation between religion and the public sphere. Jewish organizations (most of them, anyway) have been so dedicated to this task that, by now, they are absolutely convinced that such a rigid wall is constitutionally prescribed—which, for almost two centuries, it was not thought to be. Indeed, their dedication is so extreme that they can simply shrug off the absurd paradoxes that their views lead to. Do we Jews really wish to argue that it is permissible for high-school students to use a schoolroom, after hours, to study *Das Kapital* but not to study the Bible? That is exactly the position we have maneuvered ourselves into.

But what is truly important is not to quibble endlessly over details but to try to take a fresh, candid look at the political condition of American Jews today. Yesteryear's platitudes now fall flat. Times change, circumstances change, but Jewish responsibilities remain, and new opportunities ought not to be neglected in favor of yesteryear's hopes. The liberal political tradition that most Jews have long taken for granted is in danger of locking the Jewish community into a "time warp." We, all of us, have to think our way out.

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Democracy's Future

Jean-François Revel & Critics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Jean-François Revel's article, "Can the Democracies Survive?" [June], is a brilliant and eloquent manifesto, of the greatest importance. I fully agree that there is no objective reason for the democracies to succumb. But Mr. Revel's conclusion is inadequate.

Mr. Revel argues that we must maintain the deterrent credibility of the American nuclear arsenal—on this point, I fully agree—but does not tell us what forms of aggression the nuclear shield can be expected to deter. Korea? Vietnam? Israel? Turkey? Or only the United States itself?

True, Mr. Revel says that the second principle of Western foreign policy must be "to reply to any Soviet encroachments with immediate reprisals, *mainly economic*, and to make no further concessions without manifest, equivalent, and palpable counterconcessions." Here Mr. Revel falls victim to illusions like those he has so effectively denounced. Economic sanctions against aggression are of no utility. Full-throated naval blockades did not bring down Napoleon, the Kaiser, or Hitler. Economic sanctions did not even defeat tiny, landlocked Rhodesia. Yet we go on believing that economic pressures are an aseptic substitute for war, and that a halt to further Soviet imperialism would be a sufficient guarantee of peace. As a well-known authority on the subject once said, "When you deal with aggression, only one thing counts. The rest is blah blah blah."

Eugene V. Rostow
Yale University Law School
New Haven, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

Jean-François Revel has written a splendid analysis of a malaise which lies at the heart of Western democratic societies, and which is rapidly destroying their will to resist Communist aggression. Mr. Revel writes with the passion and verve of a French Solzhenitsyn.

He makes a very perceptive observation in calling attention to the fact that "unlike capitalism, Communism is not an economic system, it is a political system." . . . It is by now a well-worn observation that Marx left no blueprint for the transformation of capitalism into a "socialist economy." When the Bolsheviks took over Russia after the Revolution, they were forced to improvise economic schemes such as the collectivization of the farms in the interest of rapid industrialization at the cost of sacrificing millions of lives in the Ukraine.

The various attempts by socialist parties in Europe to work out an economic transformation of contemporary industrial societies in the light of socialist ideals have reached a point of diminishing returns. Nationalization of basic industries has provided no panacea for ailing segments of the economy, and redistribution of income has reached limits beyond which an economic system will no longer be viable.

It is one of the ironies of history that . . . while Marxism as an alternative *economic* system has proved to be a delusion in the West, it has taken on a new life in the Third World. In Central America it serves as a moral justification for the power-hungry drive of revolutionary guerrillas in Nicaragua and El Salvador to overthrow authoritarian regimes and destroy the existing social structure. In achieving this goal, the totalitarians are encouraged and supported by alienated intellectuals and their political allies in the U.S. who believe that these revolutionaries represent the only reliable force for progress and social justice. Thus, the recent abject and morally revolting "Dear Comrade Ortega" letter in which ten U.S. Congressmen made a plea to the Communist junta to conform to its promise of a pluralist society. This letter implicitly concedes that the revolution in Nicaragua has brought the *economic* justice so ardently desired for the peasants of Latin America by U.S. intellectuals and begs the junta to go through the motions of a "free election" in order to sanctify its great accomplishment in overthrowing the old social order. All that remains is to achieve *political* freedom, a rather baffling problem for the likes of Representatives Barnes and Solarz, and Senators Dodd and Tsongas.

David S. Lichtenstein
Rockville, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

The perceptive article by Jean-François Revel is especially praiseworthy for the attention it draws to the dangers arising from Western hostility to South Africa.

In his book, *The Real War* (published in 1980), former President Richard Nixon quoted a statement by the late Leonid Brezhnev: "Our aim is to gain control of the two great treasure houses on which the West depends—the energy treasure house of the Persian Gulf and the mineral treasure house of central and southern Africa." As Mr. Revel realizes, South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia are important not only as key parts of the "mineral treasure house" but also for their position on the tanker route from the Persian Gulf around the Cape of Good Hope. What Mr. Revel might have made more clear is that a base in South Africa would not only enable Soviet forces to prevent the use of the Cape route for shipment of oil to the West, but would also strengthen Moscow's hand in a future attempt to bring the "energy treasure house" into the Soviet sphere.

To defend its interests in the Persian Gulf (or elsewhere in the Indian Ocean area) without having to rely exclusively on the implausible threat of nuclear retaliation, the West needs secure lines of communication into the Indian Ocean from either the Atlantic or the Pacific—preferably both. Moscow has already acquired naval facilities at Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay, in what was once South Vietnam, thus threatening the Singapore-Malacca Strait route from the Pacific and South China Sea. Similarly, there are Soviet naval facilities in South Yemen and on Ethiopia's Dahlak Island, endangering the Suez-Red Sea route from the Atlantic and Mediterranean. A Soviet base in South Africa, on the Cape route, would complete this ominous pattern.

One Soviet instrument in south-

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ern Africa is the African National Congress (ANC), which claimed responsibility for the car bomb that exploded in Pretoria's Church Street during the afternoon rush hour on May 20, 1983. Speaking in Bulgaria in 1980, ANC leader Oliver Tambo expressed "solidarity" with the Palestine Liberation Organization, denounced the "dangerous racist-Zionist alliance of South Africa and Israel," and praised Communist Vietnam as a "free" country which had won a "historic victory" over American "occupation forces." The ANC, known to be closely linked with the Moscow-line South African Communist party, is an ally of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), to which Mr. Revel briefly refers.

Despite its terrorism, the ANC (like SWAPO) has attracted sympathy from elements in the West more interested in attacking apartheid than in opposing Communist totalitarianism. Thus it is vital to alert the public to the true motives behind ANC advocacy of economic embargoes and other anti-South African policies. Even if it did not lead to an ANC victory in South Africa, and to the establishment of a Soviet base in that country, any Western action that impeded South African exports of gold, chrome, and platinum-group metals would be highly advantageous to Moscow. By sharply increasing the price of these commodities, which the Soviet Union itself exports, it would allow the Kremlin to reap enormous profits—at our expense.

These points, I believe, reinforce Mr. Revel's contention that a policy of hostility to South Africa would be dangerous to Western interests.

KENNETH H.W. HILBORN
University of Western Ontario
London, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jean-François Revel does a great service in his illumination of the soft underbelly of democracy and how thoroughly the Communists understand and exploit it. . . . Yet his conclusions, after this brilliant analysis, are sad and even tragic.

After *going to such lengths to* prove that Communism is single-minded, dedicated, and irrevocably committed to the domination and enslavement of humanity, Mr. Revel suggests that a solution to the problem lies in reaching a higher plateau of communication and cooperation among the democracies —a return to "normal diplomacy." Mr. Revel seems to ignore the fact that it is just such "diplomacy" that has brought us where we are today. Diplomacy, as demonstrated clearly by our historical record, has no norms. It is guided by the rule of expediency and pays only lip-service to principle, ethics, and morality.

Mr. Revel's answer is no answer. . . . It reflects the sterility of the intellectual community in the area of new ideology. There must be some revolutionary . . . thinking that will capture the imagination of men and guide them to a new plateau of civilization as did the Declaration of Independence in 1776. . . .

IRWIN B. GOLDEN
Upland, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Can the Democracies Survive?" is the most lucid discussion I have read of this vital topic. To the list of self-imposed disadvantages under which the democracies labor in their struggle against totalitarianism, I would add one more: television. . . . To make my point, I ask you to fantasize with me that television had been invented thirty years earlier than it was, and that most Americans owned a color television set in 1940 as they did in 1970. Would this have altered the outcome of World War II?

In the beginning, the public reaction to Pearl Harbor would have been even stronger, if that is possible. But what then? Midway was a victory of historic proportions, made possible in part by the heroic attack of Torpedo Squadron 8. But what if we had seen in our living rooms the loss of every plane and all but one man without scoring a single hit? . . . The loss of the squadron, not the victory, might have been the salient memory. Guadalcanal was a terrible trial; watching it day by day would have been a trial for the viewers as well. Our landing in North Africa was

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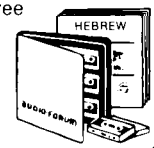

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an easy success, though we suffered hundreds of casualties at the hands of the Vichy French. But suppose these casualties had been shown in "living color." Would public resentment against the French have affected our mounting the Normandy invasion? And if it did not, would our viewing the Sicilian and Italian campaigns have dampened our desire for D-day?

The point, of course, is that our opponents would be seeing only cheerful propaganda, while we watched more or less realistic depictions of the grimness of war. This would result in two psychological disadvantages for us. First, it would tend to break down the denial that is necessary for most of us if we are to survive major stresses such as war or serious illness. Confronting reality is necessary in order to deal with it. But confronting it daily, in color, in our own homes, may eventually break down our ability to deal with it in any way other than escape, i.e., peace on any terms available, as in Vietnam. Second, seeing soldiers suffer and die, while we sit safely at home, must evoke feelings of guilt. In some this may inspire enlistment in the armed forces; in most it will inspire antiwar sentiments, in an effort to assuage the guilt by removing the proximate cause. . . . I believe this phenomenon was one (among many) of the causes of the antiwar movement in the Vietnam era. . . .

I can offer no solution consonant with freedom of the press, . . . but the problem must be stated clearly and faced honestly. Otherwise, we may find ourselves unable to conduct successfully any war longer or costlier than the one in Grenada. As a first approach, we might try censorship of television, while allowing unrestricted radio and print journalism in a war zone, short of revealing vital information to the enemy. Such an approach might be the best available compromise between freedom of the press and survival of all freedoms. If both sides could watch a war on honest television, there might be no more wars; if only the free side does so, there may be no more freedom.

DAVID C. STOLINSKY
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Jean-François Revel makes many good observations, . . . but there are some important distinctions that he totally ignores.

The first is his broad use of the term "democracy." Mr. Revel constantly refers to the "Western democracies," as if there actually exist such things. Certainly, if he means to include the United States—as I think he does—then he is confused. The U.S. was and still is a republic. I know that in contemporary thinking a republic is just a democracy on a necessarily representative scale, but that concept is wrong. There is a sharp difference between a democracy and a republic. We need only look back to the patriots who founded this nation—men like Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Marshall—to see that they thoroughly understood the distinction. . . .

These men were good students of history. They knew that no democracy had ever lasted more than a very few generations before chaos and revolution erupted, usually through demagogues promising economic equality to the masses. Despotism always followed in democracy's wake.

Thus, the republican form of government was born of necessity. It is a government of law, law that strictly limits the excesses of government no matter what the ignorant masses think they want. A government of laws rather than rule by the masses, that is the difference between a republic and a democracy. . . .

Mr. Revel's second basic mistake is again one of semantics. Just as the public no longer understands the crucial difference between a democracy and a republic, the difference between Communism and socialism is also misunderstood. Mr. Revel constantly states that Communism is the threat when Communism does not exist. Socialism is the threat. The Soviet Union is a totalitarian socialist state trying to bring about world socialism. . . . The Marxist ideal is that once each nation has achieved national socialism, then automatically all borders can be ignored and all national competition will cease. Thus the interim goal stated in all Marxist literature, past and present, calls for socialist liberation, the abolition of capitalism. It matters not one whit whether the Soviets impose socialism upon us by force or we impose it upon ourselves via . . . democracy.

And that is the key, the reason that in this struggle between freedom and tyranny, ideas are of absolute importance. Because democracy and socialism are highly compatible . . ., they are both swallowed eagerly by the masses.

But a republic and capitalism are natural mates. The right to own private property is essential to both. Man can be free in the truest sense only in a republic that utilizes a free-enterprise system of economics. . . .

GORDON IPOCK
Tarboro, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Remaining vigilant in the face of the Soviet threat is vital, but so is the maintenance of democracy at home and the encouragement of it abroad. Jean-François Revel suggests that we all recognize the need for strategically critical alliances even if they require collaboration with governments notorious for their human-rights records. While this view is essentially correct, I hold that it is in the interest of the West to encourage democracy within those countries.

Let us look at a couple of specific cases. In Greece under the Colonels (1967-74), the U.S. government tacitly supported the maintenance of a repressive military regime. Rather than force the hand of the military to open the political system and allow greater freedom of speech and reasonable political activism, the U.S. sat by, essentially encouraging a regime that could only inspire and strengthen pro-Moscow elements in Greece.

When Papandreou was elected, on a platform that demanded a pullout from the EEC and NATO, we should not have been surprised, nor should we have been dismayed when he refused to support the . . . indictment of Soviet behavior regarding KAL Flight 007.

I believe a similar argument holds true for the Shah's Iran and Somoza's Nicaragua. Those despots needed to be restrained, forced to relinquish their more brutal instruments of terror, and encouraged to tolerate political change via the ballot box. Intolerant regimes do not allow for the growth of a loyal opposition, they merely breed fanaticism among large sectors of an oppressed society. Putting it another way, Ferdinand Marcos, in his nineteenth year in power, plays perfect host to Western strategic needs; but is he going to leave the West high and dry down the road due to his mishandling of the domestic situation in the Philippines?

In my opinion, it is as mistaken to ignore vital strategic interests as

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it is to base foreign policy on this issue alone. I fear that Mr. Revel's implied view allows for excessive reliance on the former at the expense of the latter.

In a country like Turkey, for example, there is more at stake than merely the Turkish straits and the maintenance of a credible deterrent to a Soviet sweep down from the Caucasus mountains into the Middle East. Turkey has been struggling to establish a working democracy since the Ataturk revolution some sixty years ago. That so-called "fascist" military in Turkey is the keeper of the Kemalist dream of a secular, democratic, Western nation. Every time the military intervened, it did so to bring the country back to these principles and to reestablish peaceful circumstances so a return to democracy could be achieved. The Turkish General Staff intervened in 1960 and established a more liberal constitution in the aftermath of Prime Minister Menderes's wholesale abuse of his constitutional powers. In 1970, the military extended limited martial law to cope with Soviet- and PLO-supported revolutionary excesses in Turkish universities and the eastern provinces. Some eleven changes of government between 1971 and 1980, 30 to 50 people being killed daily, and the establishment of one autonomous Communist enclave on the shores of the Black Sea certainly demanded the intervention of the military once again in September 1980. No, Turkey is not a showcase of democracy. However, Turkey is moving toward democracy at a rate which its polity can cope with and for this it needs *more* support, not less.

To classify Turkey in the same category as South Africa is mistaken, but to view it exclusively in light of its strategic assets overlooks its sincere attempt to democratize its society and assimilate to the Western world. Clamor and vituperation in this case are misguided reactions, but so is the position that Turkey is merely a vital strategic zone to the West.

The growth and development of tolerant and democratic governments in the Second and Third Worlds are both a strategic and moral imperative in the long run. If the encouragement of democracy in these nations can be called cultural or political imperialism, then so be it.

LOWELL A. BEZANIS
Chicago, Illinois

JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL writes:

Before I reply to the interesting letters printed above, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that my article was taken from a book, *How Democracies Perish*, which was published in France in 1983 and which Doubleday will be bringing out in an English version next month. The book is quite long, and all its details, analysis, evidence, and arguments could not be presented in the space of an article. Though it might sound complacent, I daresay most of the objections raised in the letters are answered in the book. Perhaps I should say instead that I *agree* with most of the objections because in the main they coincide with the central themes of my book, though, for obvious reasons, these could not all be fully covered in the article.

For example, to deal with Eugene V. Rostow's first objection, one of the main points I make in *How Democracies Perish* is exactly his. I emphasize that the classical Soviet way to blackmail the democracies is to tell us: "If you resist Moscow in Afghanistan, Angola, Chad, El Salvador, or even inside the port of Stockholm, you will start a general nuclear war" (and partisans of one-way détente, of no-linkage, and of "let's avoid confrontation at all cost" endorse this view). Of course nuclear deterrence does not apply to all kinds of aggression: it does not apply to international terrorism; it does not apply to the stealing of technology. We should resist these aggressions "in kind," but we don't, or do so only very little, because we have been trained to see ourselves as a "threat to peace" or "trigger-happy nuclear warmongers" if we do.

As for Mr. Rostow's second objection, economic sanctions: I agree that it is very difficult to gauge their real impact, though I tend to think it cannot be completely nil—after all, Napoleon and Hitler were defeated and history is full of examples of cities surrendering after sieges that cut off their food and water supplies. But the effects of economic sanctions cannot be readily gauged because they are never really implemented. Moreover, Western democracies usually tend to think sanctions are inefficient only when the Soviet Union or a Communist country is the target. For instance, in January 1982 Mrs. Thatcher said that economic sanctions against the Siberian pipeline were useless, but in May 1982, during the Falklands war, she told all Britain's allies that they *had* to apply sanctions against Argentina. So, in my view, democratic reluctance to apply sanctions against the Soviet Union is a *political* fact, not the result of *economic* analysis. Finally, in most instances, what we call sanctions against the Soviets merely amount to the *withdrawal of a privilege*: subsidized credits, selling them goods below the market price, buying their gas above the market price, etc. Again, then, what is at stake is a political approach rather than an economic one. We think: "If we stop helping them, they will become more dangerous"—which is exactly what they want us to think.

To David S. Lichtenstein's observations, I would add that, by now, even in the Third World, confidence in socialism, in state-owned and centrally-planned economies, is worn out. Twenty years ago it was fashionable to compare China's alleged successes with India's failure. Today we know, and it was true then as well, that it should be the other way around. Algeria, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, Jamaica (under Manley) are dramatic failures. During the military-socialist experiment in Peru (1968-80), GNP fell by 60 percent. The illusions about Castro's Cuba lasted about ten years; about Nicaragua, just one year. The letter from the Congressmen which Mr. Lichtenstein cites is an exception. Possibly the last doctrinaire Marxists today live in the United States. But I agree that this new perception of the inefficiency of the socialist system in the developing economies has probably come too late and that a lot of political damage has already been done.

To Kenneth H. W. Hilborn, I wish to say I am perfectly aware of how much is at stake in South Africa. Our relations with South Africa exemplify the moral quagmire in which the democracies must operate, a handicap totalitarian regimes don't have to face. We feel, and sympathizers of the Communist world tell us, that we have no moral right because of apartheid to support South Africa in its fight against gradual Soviet encirclement. But no one tells the Soviets they have no right to protect their interests unless they enhance human rights everywhere. Such an objection would make everyone laugh, including ourselves. And it's

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true, in my view, that democracies do have special duties that make their foreign policy difficult.

Although I am convinced that apartheid will disappear sooner than the gulag, I am also convinced that South Africa will remain fair game in the meantime for all the virtuosos of the double standard. The sufferings inflicted on the black populations of Africa by black dictators have been and are much worse than anything the black man has to bear in South Africa, though the situation of South African blacks is in any case unacceptable. But despite his Stalinist leanings, Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe (to give just one example) is considered respectable while Prime Minister Botha of South Africa is not. It is considered legitimate for an American or European foreign minister to deal with Mugabe (or Samora Machel of Mozambique), but not with Botha. We have to realize that such a double standard is a permanent fixture of our foreign policy, though at the same time we must also expose the human-rights violations of self-proclaimed progressives.

Speaking of foreign policy, I disagree with Irwin B. Golden about "normal diplomacy." Ours has not been "normal diplomacy," it has been a policy of unilateral concessions. The rule of normal diplomacy is, do not give anything away unless at the same time you get something equivalent or, it is to be hoped, more important in return. The rule of détente (and détente began at Yalta) is to give away what you have—and wait. If nothing comes from the other side—just give away something else, etc., etc.

As for the "new plateau of civilization," it raises the problem of a "counter-ideology," to which I devote a whole chapter in my book; it is a riddle I also tried to analyze in a previous book, *The Totalitarian Temptation*. In brief, there have been in the 20th century two kinds of revolution: the totalitarian revolution and the democratic revolution. The first one has been an abysmal failure, the second a reasonable success—but only the people who live under totalitarianism know this.

I don't think I would endorse completely David C. Stolinsky's phrase, the "self-imposed disadvantages" of the democracies, since these so-called disadvantages are actually the cornerstone of democracy, the counterpart of its advantages. But of course I know what he means; in Chapter 16 of *How Democracies Perish*, I draw a parallel between the Vietnam war, permanently covered by the media, and the Tibetan genocide perpetrated by the Chinese, which took place during the same period and went completely unnoticed. Mr. Stolinsky asks whether confronting reality every day, at home, on TV, seeing soldiers die, will not break the determination to pay the price for freedom. The trouble is that TV doesn't bring us *reality*, only a part of reality. TV can show us soldiers dying in Lebanon, but cannot show us the geopolitical implications of the Lebanese war.

Of course, the words of the anchormen are supposed to explain the context, but when you read them separately, you discover that they are even more simplistic than the images presented on the screen. TV is technically sophisticated but culturally primitive. Unlike the press, which of necessity flourished with the disappearance of illiteracy, TV doesn't presuppose a greater capacity to *think* on the part of those who watch it (or who create it, for that matter)—on the contrary.

No doubt this is a challenge democracy has to cope with, but in a democratic way: not by censorship but by setting higher standards of responsibility. And that is something only the public can achieve. In fact, I understand the public has already begun to be much more critical of TV news than it was in the "good old days" of the 60's and 70's.

I am not convinced by Gordon Ipock's statement that a "republic and capitalism are natural mates," since the USSR is a republic and Spain is not. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the United Kingdom are not republics, but they are democracies. Greece under the Colonels was a republic, not a democracy. So is Communist China and Qaddafi's Libya, but not Luxembourg, which is a Grand Duchy and a democracy. So I do feel that the real distinction nowadays is between democratic and non-democratic countries. As to whether democracies exist, my answer is: the best way to find out is to live a few years in a non-democratic country. Mr. Ipock also says that a republic implies capitalism. I would put it another way: I would say that democracy is a system *where the economy is separate from the political power*, at least where the economy is not totally or mainly run by the political power. Where the political and economic power (and usually the cultural power as well) merge, democracy dies.

As for the difference between socialism and Communism, if we go back to principles, I agree with Mr. Ipock that there is no difference: both aim at the abolition of capitalism, and socialism is the path which leads to Communism. In fact, the Communist countries call themselves the "socialist camp." But experience suggests the following distinctions. At the theoretical level, I would call socialism the political philosophy that advocates the break with private enterprise and the collectivization of the economy. At the practical level, I call Communist all countries where a Communist party has grabbed the monopoly of power and applied the Leninist rule of "democratic centralism." Communist parties in free societies struggle to attain such power, but in the meantime are themselves run internally according to that same rule of "democratic centralism." (The Italian Communist party is no exception, in spite of the illusions of many liberals.)

Now, still at the practical level, in democratic societies there are two kinds of socialist parties: the Marxist-socialists like Mitterrand and Papandreou, who wish to nationalize the economy while preserving political freedom and pluralism. Then there are the social democrats, who don't want to nationalize the economy but want a highly developed welfare state: this group includes Felipe González of Spain, Mário Soares of Portugal, Bettino Craxi of Italy, and the German and Scandinavian socialists, all of whom believe in the necessity of free enterprise and of the market. Of course, the Communists and the Marxist-socialists call them renegades.

I quite agree, finally, with Lowell A. Bezanis. What he describes *is* one of the duties of the democracies, a duty the totalitarian states, of course, do not have, which makes things much easier for them. They use that double standard so well that one of their main courses of action is destabilizing fragile democracies, especially through terrorism, and turning them into dictatorships. They can then say, "Look what kind of powers the

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United States is supporting!" The Soviets achieved this beautifully in Turkey; they failed in Spain, where the military coup indirectly triggered by ETA terrorists was crushed in 1981. (I would like to draw Mr. Ipock's attention to the fact that the failure of the coup was due mainly to the king's loyalty to democratic institutions.)

I would deny, nevertheless, that the Greek Colonels were put into power by the White House. Greece has a solid and old tradition of dictatorship, and John Metaxas, the dictator of the 30's, was not, I believe, a puppet of the CIA, which in any case did not exist in those days. The "caudillism" of the Latin Americans is a tradition the U.S. did not invent, though too often, I agree, it has used this tradition in an immoral way. I don't think Washington *put* Marcos where he is. I am sure the State Department would be much happier if the Philippines were run in the same democratic way Switzerland is. From the defense point of view, it would be much safer.

To impose democracy on the Third World is a noble goal, but one which is nevertheless considered imperialistic by the Third World. Moreover, the worst dictators of the Third World will tell you that they *are* democratic. And it was not the United States or Western Europe which tried to impose censorship of the news, through UNESCO, under the preposterous name of the "New International Information Order," but the Third World itself, developing an idea conceived by the Soviet Union. In conclusion, to tell the democracies, "You have no right to fight for your own survival unless and until the whole world has become democratic" boils down to saying, "You have no right to try to solve your problem unless and until there is no problem."

The Deficit

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . As Melville J. Ulmer details in his pithy article, "Deficit Thinking" [June], our government has been unable to resist the temptation of going into debt so that it can spend beyond its means. Mr. Ulmer concludes his essay by faintheartedly suggesting that the growth of the government debt could be slowed by cutting government expenditures. His preceding analysis, though, demonstrates that neither Republicans nor Democrats have the political resources either to reduce expenditures decisively or raise taxes.

The question Mr. Ulmer thus leaves unanswered is, What is the consequence of the unchecked growth in the national debt? At present, tax revenues do not cover government expenditures, let alone leave anything for paying the interest on government debt. The interest the government pays the holders of its obligations is hence drawn not out of the productive bases of the economy, but rather out of the sale of new interest-bearing debt. The continued infusion of government-debt instruments into the banking system reduces the value of the currency or, in other words, stimulates inflation.

Periodic attempts to halt currency debasement through restricting the activities of the private sector not only have a high social cost, but provide only temporary relief. Ironically, underlying inflationary pressures are exacerbated. For example, during the recent reign of high interest rates under Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, the government debt increased because: (1) the depressed private sector paid less taxes, and (2) the cost of financing new debt and rolling over old debt rose. A sincere anti-inflation policy would avoid further increases in government debt. Failing this, gradual currency debasement is inevitable; it is as certain as that night follows day.

Forrest D. Colburn
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Melville J. Ulmer's support of the Grace report shows a lack of sophistication at the least. The report pancakes papers written by many people over the years, as well as some quick and illogical "studies" by members of the Grace group. Some papers plagiarized, apparently without credit, the work of people not part of the group. . . .

Mr. Ulmer points out that the Grace commission has claimed $424 billion could be "saved" over three years by correcting managerial failures. He then adds . . . that "even if only half the advertised savings proved achievable, the federal deficit would cease to be a worry." But only the most naive believe even half the savings would result from the Grace proposals. When pressed, one of the members of the

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"He was the last of the old-time sinners, a man of world-shaking weaknesses who never tried to turn his transgressions into principles. His scandalous romance with Elizabeth Taylor consumed acres of newsprint, but he somehow refused to accept the role of swinger: He was betraying his wife, and he knew it, and he communicated guilt when others would have taken the current line that fidelity is an outmoded concept. Such trendy ploys were not for him."

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commission refused to deny that $57 billion would be the outside figure, but said we should not argue about the amount.

We should question the entire report because it was written by people with a preconceived goal—to cut costs in spite of everything. The report did not claim to "leave services intact." Many services would be cut back beyond the already unfortunate destruction of the safety net. Perhaps Mr. Ulmer has noticed that after years of progress toward doing away with malnutrition and hunger, both have returned to destroy a number of our future citizens. Those who live will be less able to pay taxes than to use them. Most of the sensible parts of the report were written by or with the assistance of civil servants, who were directed to correct portions of the nonsense proposed by the businessmen. . . .

Any economist who recommends a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution, and who believes we are overtaxed, also must believe that Calvin Coolidge was the last of the great American Presidents. He also must just love boom and bust, poverty for those without Ph.D's, and revolutions to redress the balance when the system fails.

HAROLD M. BAILIN
College Park, Maryland

MELVILLE J. ULMER writes:

Forrest D. Colburn must have overlooked the final third of my article in which the effect of a constantly rising national debt is described. Suffice it to say now that the long impact is virtually certain to include inflation, a relative expansion in the economy's public sector, and declining private investment and productivity.

Nevertheless, in the light of current developments, the immediate dangers do not appear as grave as Mr. Colburn alleges. One relevant fact, included in my article, is that the strength of the present recovery is actually diminishing the deficit; by the end of this fiscal year, on October 1, it is now expected to be down by $60 billion, which is more than the additional reduction that Congress is still trying to legislate. Meanwhile, instead of accelerating wildly, the inflation rate has fallen below the levels of the two previous recoveries, breaking a twenty-year pattern of ever sharper increases. A remarkable surge of investment has extended and improved industrial capacity. The immediate threat to prosperity is not the deficit (which in time must indeed be attended to) but an excessively tight rein on the money supply. It's only a guess, but I'm hoping the Federal Reserve's heavy hand will soon lighten.

Harold M. Bailin's letter apparently equates "sophistication" with a passionate belief in the beneficence of federal spending in all its details and ramifications. Hence he charges the Grace report (which finds much public spending extravagant or wasteful) with everything from "plagiarism" to culpable carelessness and just plain mercenary malice—and all without documentation or other evidence. Since I expressed a judgment that the Grace report had some merit worthy of attention, Mr. Bailin assumes that I also favor the spread of poverty, and perhaps the death by starvation that he now sees sweeping the American countryside. In all this I perceive only interesting evidence of what an extraordinary imagination can do when fired by powerful, mindlessly unbridled emotions.

Just to keep the record straight, I did *not* recommend a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution without qualification, which would be clearly unworkable. My endorsement was for a flexible restriction on deficits, applicable over a sensible number of years, to allow for inevitable cyclical fluctuations and other strictly limited exigencies.

Adlai vs. Ike

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the July COMMENTARY Lionel Abel, in an excellent review of a book about the abstract expressionist painters ["How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art," by Serge Guilbaut], drags in my name so as to contrast the political views of the painters with mine. They, writes Mr. Abel, supported Adlai Stevenson against Dwight Eisenhower in 1952, while I "was preaching that there was not a dime's worth of political difference between the two candidates."

Not so. Though I regarded the enthusiasm many intellectuals then showed for Stevenson as excessive, I did support and vote for him, precisely because I thought there was "a dime's worth of political difference. . . ." And I said as much in *Dissent* (Winter 1954, p. 12).

IRVING HOWE
New York City

LIONEL ABEL writes:

When I heard Irving Howe tear to shreds the "illusions" entertained by Stevenson supporters at a meeting called by *Dissent* in 1952, I must myself have been full of illusions about the judgments of intellectuals. I could not conceive of Howe voting for Stevenson or urging his election in *Dissent*. If he did all this, I stand corrected.

Jews in Muslim Lands

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bernard Lewis has written a very important and informative article, "The Decline and Fall of Islamic Jewry" [June], which does away . . . with a lot of misconceptions and misinformation. The Golden Age of Jewish existence in Spain under Muslim rule is regarded as the rule, and not as the exception which in fact it was.

A similar phenomenon took place in Germany, where less than a hundred years of more or less full equality of rights and duties were regarded as such an important and significant achievement that the preceding chapters of Jewish maltreatment (popular, religious, and administrative) were conveniently forgotten.

Of course, Muslim rule—on the average and by comparison—was better than Christian rule, insofar as Jews were concerned, and where Arab and Muslim countries were dominated by European powers, Jewish fate showed a remarkable improvement. The Turks, too, had their enlightened periods—hence the migration to countries under Turkish rule after the expulsion from Spain. But under real Muslim rule, ancient and modern, the Jew was a second-class citizen, a *dhimmi*. Therefore, Jewish sovereignty in Israel is regarded as a real affront by Arabs and Muslims in general—something enlightened Jews cannot understand, just as enlightened Jews in Germany were unable to understand the Nazis. . . .

PEREZ TURA
Rehovot, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an American living in Khartoum, Sudan, a country now in the midst of an "Islamic revolution," I was particularly struck by the timeliness of Bernard Lewis's article. Mr. Lewis's reference to the promulgation of anti-Semitism by certain Muslim states is not merely of historical interest. Since I arrived

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in the Sudan some months ago, there have been only four newspapers at newsstands in Khartoum: two government-controlled Arabic-language papers published in Khartoum, which deal almost exclusively with Sudanese affairs; the *Arab News,* which is published daily in Arabic and English in Riyadh and Jidda, Saudi Arabia, and which arrives in Khartoum about one day late; and the *Saudi Gazette*, a daily paper in English published in Jidda, which also usually arrives a day late. Most English-reading Sudanese, therefore, as well as non-Arabic reading foreigners resident in Khartoum, tend to rely, at least in part, on the two Saudi dailies. (Both *Time* and *Newsweek* are also generally available in Khartoum.)

Commencing on May 27, 1984, the *Saudi Gazette* began publishing, in a prominent fashion, the segments contained in Henry Ford's *International Jew* series, originally published (according to the *Gazette*) in Michigan in 1922. Printing one long segment a day, the *Gazette* completed the series on June 17, 1984.

The *Gazette* began the Ford series of articles with its own introduction, which states in part: "[Ford's] uncanny observation has held good since, with false Jewish ideas still sapping the moral stamina of the American people. . . . The villainous Jew that emerges in this book fits well into the classic mold of [the] present-day Jew." No byline is given for the identity of the author of this introduction, so one must assume that it was written by the editor of the *Gazette*. The articles themselves contain an unending rash of stereotypes about Jews, as the following samples indicate:

> The American people would be vastly surprised if they could see a lineup of some of the "American businessmen" who hold up our commercial prestige overseas. They are mostly Jews (May 27).
>
> The Jew glories in religious prejudice as the American glories in patriotism. Religious prejudice is the Jews' chief expression of their own patriotism (May 29).
>
> The Jewish nation is the only nation that possesses the secrets of the rest. The fact that they can get whatever they want whenever they want it is the important point (June 3).
>
> The powerhouse of Communist influence and propaganda in the U.S. is in the Jewish trade unions which, almost without exception, adhere to a Bolshevik program for their respective industries and for the country as a whole (June 7).

The prominence given to the Ford articles by the *Gazette* was reinforced by the large eye-catching headlines employed in the paper.... This is, of course, the spreading of vintage hate through one of the major newspapers in the most prominent Muslim state, Saudi Arabia. If the classified advertisements section of the *Gazette* is any indication, the paper has a relatively wide international circulation. In a recent issue (June 13, 1984) . . . there were classified ads from as far away as Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, Egypt, Pakistan, and Ghana by persons seeking employment.

Your readers should be grateful to Bernard Lewis for highlighting an important aspect of the environment in which the Arab-Israeli dispute prevails.

[NAME WITHHELD]
Khartoum, Sudan

Bartók

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel Lipman's "Bartók at the Piano" [May] is most perceptive and convincing. One of his observations, however, is based on a mistaken premise and cannot properly be used to support his somewhat negative opinion of Bartók as a pianist. In evaluating Bartók's recorded performance of his popular miniature "Evening in Transylvania" (better known as "Evening in the Country"), Mr. Lipman objects to a seemingly "arbitrary dislocation of the natural rhythmic flow" in the rendition of the main theme; he also adds that "pianist Bartók seems disinclined to observe the scrupulous markings of composer Bartók." This example does not warrant the conclusion Mr. Lipman draws from it. The theme in question, a freely flowing pentatonic chant, deeply rooted in the Hungarian folk idiom, is by its very nature open to subtle metric fluctuations in performance and is very difficult, indeed impossible, to pin down in terms of exact notation.

Bartók, who performed this piece by popular request at nearly all of his concerts, obviously had problems when committing the theme to paper. The original notation of 1908 was revised by him in the early 1930's and, as a result, there are two authentic printed versions available. Ideally, the theme should have been notated without bar lines, but Bartók—because he wrote the piece with a didactic purpose in mind—probably felt that metric indications would be helpful for the student. It is also obvious that he did not feel bound by either of the note pictures he devised, and he deviated from them almost every time he performed the work. This is by no means proof, as Mr. Lipman suggests, that Bartók's solo playing had "a certain wayward quality," or was a sign of "an almost vulgar taste," or "a lack of involvement in the structure of music."

All the foregoing notwithstanding, it would be difficult to disagree with Mr. Lipman's general conclusion that Bartók, a great composer by all accounts, was not one of the immortals of pianism.

DENES AGAY
New York City

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

Denes Agay is quite correct to point to the difficulty of notating folk-derived music in the system which has been developed out of, and for, our art-music tradition. But in the case of "Evening in Transylvania" Bartók did make the effort, and was not completely successful in conveying *both* the full implications of his own notation *and* the artistic shape of the piece. It is as if the composer Bartók and the pianist Bartók fought, and neither won: the notation was not realized and the musical effect was incomplete. Whether composer Bartók might have done better I don't know. Pianist Bartók, I think, could have.

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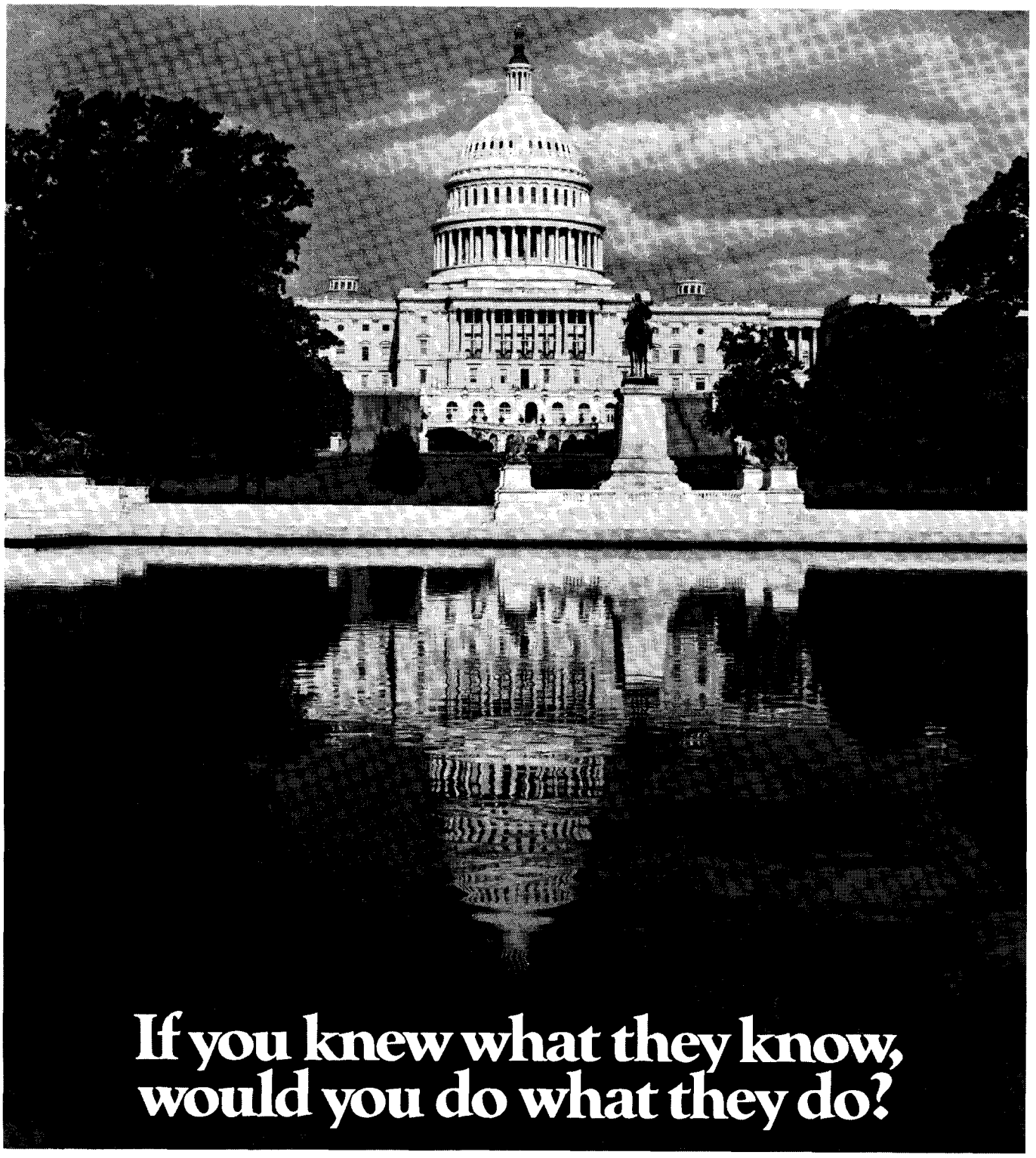

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Has the Burger Court Gone Too Far?

Walter Berns

ONLY yesterday, it seems, federal judges were being admired for refusing to confine themselves to the modest but appropriate role of interpreters of statutory or constitutional texts. The late Justice William O. Douglas especially was esteemed in liberal circles precisely because, as someone said, he "dared" to raise the question of what was good for the country and then to translate (or, at least, to try to translate) his answers into constitutional law. The authors of *The Brethren*, Washington *Post* writers Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong, called this most "activist" of judges our "greatest living jurist" and regretted his retirement from the Supreme Court. Better than any other of its members, not excluding the Chief Justice who gave it its name, Douglas characterized the Warren Court, and among liberals that Court was held to be the best or among the best in our history.

According to J. Skelley Wright, at the time Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, the Warren Court taught the country that there need be no "gulf between the law and morality"; bridging the gap between them was understood to be the proper role of the courts, and especially of the Supreme Court. Occasionally some crabbed commentator would warn the public of the danger of conceding this sort of power to federal judges who, after all, tend to serve at their own pleasure and are responsible to no one. But in the opinion of those who counted—Harvard law professor Abram Chayes, for a conspicuous example—the Court was properly charged with this duty, and the Warren Court especially could be trusted with it.

This view of the Supreme Court as preceptor and pontiff survived the advent of the Burger Court—for a time, at least. It was, after all, the Burger Court that struck down the abortion laws of all fifty states, and did so without bothering to specify the constitutional provisions with which they were held to be in conflict. The liberal community, led by the national press, responded enthusiastically, for this was exactly the sort of bridge-building between law and morality it had come to expect from the Court. What it seems not to have expected is the flurry of decisions handed down by the Burger Court in July of this year, at the close of its 1983-84 term.

In this one term the Court allowed a city to include a crèche in its annual Christmas display; upheld a National Park Service regulation forbidding camping in Lafayette Square across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House; upheld a federal statute denying financial assistance to students who fail to register for the draft; ruled that a court may not order the City of Memphis to protect the jobs of recently-hired black firemen at the expense of white firemen protected by a seniority agreement with the city; upheld, as a valid exercise of authority granted by a federal statute, an administrative regulation inhibiting travel to Cuba; ruled that prisoners did not enjoy Fourth Amendment privacy rights; carved out an exception to the *Miranda* rule which restricts police interrogation of persons in custody; and, in two decisions that provoked the greatest criticism, created a "good faith" exception to the exclusionary rule.

There were other "illiberal" decisions, but it was mainly these that caused a reaction in the liberal press that ranged from consternation to outrage. *Newsweek* complained that the Court had moved to the Right, and the New York *Times* editorialized, with a chagrin it made no effort to conceal, that the Court was now dominated by "conservatives." Other reactions were more extreme, and invoked the specter of a usurpation of power. In the view of the American Civil Liberties Union, the Court, whose decisions were "genuinely appalling," could now properly be labeled "statist." Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe was widely quoted as saying that it was one of the saddest Supreme Court terms in recent memory. "I was quite struck by the fact that the Statue of Liberty was in shackles and being dismantled as the Court was coming to an end," he stated. "In one sphere after another, the Court has affirmed the almost boundless authority of government over the individual and of the executive over the other branches." If this trend continued, warned an ACLU spokesman, "individual rights will mean

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only what the government wants them to." The New York *Times,* once content with the "supreme discretion" enjoyed by the Court, now saw the need to impose some limits on it.

It was the prospect that these decisions would prove to be final, or at least enduring, that was especially disconcerting. "Those wondering this election year what a Reagan Supreme Court might be like need look no further than the extraordinary court term that ended last week," pronounced Fred Barbash in the Washington *Post*; "a Reagan Court is here." What he did not say was that there then seemed to be little hope of getting rid of it, not when the July polls showed Ronald Reagan running well ahead of Walter Mondale, the probable Democratic candidate, and not when it was anticipated that the next President would have the opportunity to appoint two or more Justices to the Court. Nor was that all: before it recessed to allow its Democratic members to attend their party's convention in San Francisco, Congress created 85 new lower federal court judgeships, 40 of them to be filled during the current presidential term and the rest during the next.

Liberals who dislike the recent Court decisions have an unenviably hard argument on their hands. They cannot, as did their predecessors in the 1930's, contend that this Court is misinterpreting the Constitution. Anyone who accepts the view that the job of a judge is to ask what is good for the country and then to translate his answer into constitutional law has to admit that, in this view, a constitutional provision can be interpreted but not misinterpreted, construed but not misconstrued, and that the Constitution itself is a thing without substance until judges give it substance.

"Let's be honest with the public," wrote a California judge cast in the Douglas mold, "the so-called 'landmark' decisions of both the U.S. Supreme Court and the California Supreme Court were not compelled by legal precedent." On the contrary, he went on, they were "the product of the social, economic, and political philosophy of the majority of the justices who made up the court at a given time in history." As for Laurence Tribe, some years before he had visions of Burger and his colleagues dismantling the Statute of Liberty, he wrote a two-volume treatise in which he had difficulty deciding when a Supreme Court decision was "legitimate" and ended up with the lame assurance that it depends on whether the "outcome" is accepted by "the political processes at large." This idea was carried to its conclusion by Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., one-time chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, in an op-ed piece in the Washington *Post* four years ago: the Supreme Court, Rauh wrote, is a political, not a legal, institution; it is "part of our nation's political process, and the sooner this is accepted the better."

Assuming (but only for the sake of argument) these views are right, then it is altogether appropriate that the issue of the Burger Court be decided not by constitutional scholars but by the American people. The Democrats have decided to make the Court and its composition an issue in the campaign, but my judgment is that they will have a hard time convincing an electoral majority that the cases at issue were decided wrongly. If, during the heyday of the Warren Court, Justice Douglas was allowed to find a right to privacy in what he called "penumbras, formed by emanations" from the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments, I suspect that most people, if polled, would decide that the Burger Court was right when, somewhere, it discovered a "good faith" exception to the exclusionary rule. A brief review of the suspect decisions should help to make my point.

The crèche case

Most of the blame for this decision—and it is the least defensible—should be laid on the American Civil Liberties Union. The Pawtucket, Rhode Island crèche was displayed (as part of a larger Christmas decoration) not on public property but on grounds belonging to a nonprofit organization. It was, however, originally purchased by the city with public funds, and it was as taxpayers that the ACLU filed suit and, very foolishly I think, was allowed to file suit. Since the ACLU follows these affairs very closely indeed, it ought to have remembered that only a few months prior to taking review of this case the Supreme Court had upheld a long-time Nebraska practice of paying a Presbyterian minister who served, and for years had been serving, as chaplain to the state legislature, opening each of its sessions with a prayer. (The First Congress of the United States, the very Congress that wrote the First Amendment, had done the same thing; it would hence have been somewhat difficult to find an element of unconstitutionality in the practice.) Having this Nebraska case in mind, the ACLU ought then to have anticipated that it might lose the Pawtucket case. For how great is the constitutional distance between employing a chaplain and buying a crèche? Besides, by the time the case reached the Supreme Court, the city had *sold* the crèche to some private party or parties, which put it in the same legal category as the millions of other Christmas symbols displayed by churches and private homeowners all over the country and readily visible to Christians and non-Christians alike.

The city's involvement having been completely removed, at least formally, there was reason enough to declare the case moot. Instead, the Court decided it on the merits, holding the display as a whole to have a secular purpose which was not made religious by the inclusion of the crèche.

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This was the Court's way of saying that Christian Christmas shoppers could focus on the crèche and non-Christian shoppers on the red-nosed reindeer. Most Americans, I suspect, would be prepared to accept that advice.

The camping case

ONLY Justices Marshall and Brennan dissented in this case. It began when the Community for Creative Non-Violence was given a permit to erect symbolic tents in Lafayette Square in Washington, D.C., in order to dramatize "the plight of the homeless," but was denied permission to camp out in them. The group was allowed to demonstrate, to carry placards, to erect signs, to make speeches, but not to camp out. Lafayette Square, unlike the precisely defined sections of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and other such places, had not been designated a camping ground by the National Park Service, the responsible federal agency.

The Court held this to be a reasonable "time, place, and manner" regulation, one applying to everyone, regardless of the camping equipment he intended to use or the political message he hoped to deliver. The dissenting Justices nevertheless protested that these campers wanted to make a political statement by sleeping in the park—to talk in their sleep, so to speak—and by not granting the camping permit the government was depriving them of their constitutionally-protected freedom of speech. The government, they said, was "denying respondents' request to engage in sleep-speech."

I for one would welcome the opportunity to allow "our nation's political process" (in Joseph Rauh's words) to decide whether "sleep-speech" is a constitutional right, and whether, by forbidding it across from the White House, the government becomes authoritarian or "statist."

The student and the draft case

HERE the Court upheld a 1983 statute denying federal financial aid to students who refuse to file a statement with their schools indicating that they are in compliance with the draft-registration requirement. The schools, certainly the colleges and universities, have experience enough with this sort of federal regulation. For years now, as a condition of the financial assistance they receive, they have been willing to comply with all sorts of federal regulations: enrolling minority students, hiring women faculty, fielding female ice-hockey teams, and repealing their rules against interracial dating. Under a Constitution that presumably establishes a federal government of limited powers, there is, no doubt, a good deal to be said against this sort of statute, but the colleges and universities are not in a position to say it.

What about the students? The dissenters—Marshall and Brennan again—although agreeing on nothing else, and although willing to concede that the withholding of financial aid could not fairly be likened to torture, did insist that the students were being compelled to incriminate themselves. The short but sufficient answer to this is that no student is compelled to apply for financial aid. Beyond that, the electorate, if asked, is likely to agree that the country is not obliged to support anyone who, as a matter of principle, refuses to support the country. "Millions for defense, but not one cent for slackers!" An ugly slogan, but probably a winner.

The Memphis firemen's case

THE issue here is affirmative action or, viewed from the other side, reverse discrimination. The City of Memphis entered into an agreement with the firemen's union providing that, in the event of a force reduction, firemen would be laid off in reverse order of seniority. Later, it signed a consent decree whose terms required it to hire and promote black firemen until the proportion of blacks in the fire department equaled the proportion of blacks in the county in which the city is located. Still later, faced with a lack of funds, the city announced that it would have to discharge firemen but would protect those with seniority. At this point the district court, without consulting the union, modified the consent decree and, on the basis of this modified decree, issued an injunction forbidding layoffs according to seniority, thereby protecting the recently-hired black firemen at the expense of the more senior white firemen.

The statute involved here, and relied on by all the parties, is Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which forbids discrimination in employment. But section 703(h) of that title provides, in part, that "it shall not be an unlawful employment practice for an employee to apply different . . . terms, conditions, or privileges of employment pursuant to a bona fide seniority or merit system . . . provided that such differences are not the result of an intention to discriminate. . . ." The Supreme Court agreed with the Court of Appeals that the city's layoff plan, based on the seniority system, was not adopted with an intention to discriminate on the basis of race.

This summary ignores the complicated aspects of the case which, in essence, have to do with whether it was really necessary to deal with the affirmative-action issue. Perhaps it could have been avoided; there is precedent enough for doing so. But there is also reason to confront it, openly, forthrightly, and, for once, honestly. By making an issue of this case in the presidential electon, liberals would enable us to find out whether, when quotas are given their correct designation and this form of affirmative action is called by its right name—reverse discrimination—they have the support of the American people.

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The Cuba travel case

WHAT is interesting about this case is that, in majority and dissenting opinion alike, the word "grandfather" was used as a verb, and not only that but as a verb denoting action incapable of being performed by a grandfather. A grandfather, for example, is not capable of begetting a grandson; only his son can do that for him. But in this strange locutionary world, Congress is capable of "grandfathering" all sorts of things.

The issue here was whether, when enacting the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977, Congress "grandfathered" only existing restrictions on travel to Cuba or, in addition, other restrictions that had been, or might in the future be, imposed by executive order. The Court agreed with the government, accepting the more expansive view of what Congress intended to "grandfather" in 1977. Since all the Justices agreed that the government might have relied on another provision of IEEPA; since, in fact, no one was being forbidden to travel to Cuba but merely to enter into any "property transactions" with Cuba—the idea being that Cuba should not get its hands on our "hard currency" which it would then use to support international terrorism; since persons who are intent on traveling to Cuba—Jesse Jackson comes to mind—seem to be able to do so without much trouble; and since the respondents' counsel in this case was the leftist Leonard Boudin, which suggests to me that they were more concerned with "making a statement" than in winning their case, I am disposed to leave this one with a statement of my own: who cares what was "grandfathered"? Not, I would guess, a majority of the electorate.

The prisoner's privacy case

CONTRARY to *Newsweek*'s account, the Court here did not deny prisoners "the right to keep pictures of their families." Nor, although one would never know it from the story in the New York *Times*, did it hold that prisoners have no protection against arbitrary seizures or harassing searches. To the contrary, Chief Justice Burger, writing for the Court, specifically said that, of course, "there is a risk of maliciously motivated searches, and of course, intentional harassment of even the most hardened criminals cannot be tolerated by a civilized society." The disagreement had to do with the remedy available to the prisoner who is subjected to such harassment and searches, the majority holding that the Fourth Amendment's proscription of unreasonable searches and seizures does not apply within the confines of a prison cell. It had good reason so to hold.

The prisoner brought this suit against a prison officer under section 1983 of Title 42 of the U.S. Code. Since this provision will figure as well in my discussion of the exclusionary rule, I shall quote it in full:

> Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State or Territory, subjects, or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws, shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress.

There is no question that state prison guards, acting in their official capacity, are acting under "color" of state law. And among the rights "secured by the Constitution" is the right against unreasonable searches and seizures. But to hold that prisoners, as well as the rest of us, are entitled to the full enjoyment of that right would prevent prison guards from conducting the kind of "shakedown" search—sudden, unannounced, and, of course, conducted without a warrant—involved in this case; and to hold that prisoners are entitled to some but not full enjoyment of that right would provoke a flood of suits against prison officials, almost certainly to the detriment of their ability to maintain order and provide safety within the prisons. That prisoners are disposed to bring such suits under section 1983, and that federal courts are disposed to hear them, can be demonstrated with a case that reached the Supreme Court in 1981, *Parrott and Lugenbill* v. *Taylor*.

Parrott was the warden of the Nebraska Penal and Correctional Complex; Taylor was an inmate in that prison. With his prison savings, Taylor ordered, by mail, what the Supreme Court reports describe as "hobby materials," costing $23.50. In due course, the "hobby materials" (presumably some sort of game) arrived at the prison mailroom. Unfortunately, at the time they arrived, Taylor was in solitary confinement. Prisoners in solitary confinement are apparently not entitled to enjoy "hobby materials," even their own; at any rate, Taylor was not permitted to leave solitary confinement in order to sign for them, and prison regulations required all packages arriving in the mailroom to be signed for by the addressee. Upon his release from solitary confinement, he immediately repaired to the mailroom and asked for his package. It had arrived, but it was not in the mailroom. A thorough search disclosed no "hobby materials." They had been lost, probably stolen, and were presumably being enjoyed by a mailroom employee or another inmate with access to the mailroom.

Taylor, naturally enough, was distraught. The "hobby materials" were his. He had paid for them; they were his *property*. And the Constitution of the United States protects property. More precisely, the Fourteenth Amendment provides

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that no state shall deprive any person of his property without due process of law. Taylor had surely been deprived of his property, and not by any process of law that one could fairly describe as "due." So, naturally enough in our time, he sued the prison warden, Parrott, and his colleague, Francis Lugenbill (who is described as the prison "Hobby Manager") for $23.50, the cost of the "hobby materials." In his complaint, Taylor alleged that, because of their carelessness, they, acting under the color of Nebraska law, had deprived him of a constitutional right.

The federal district judge, on summary judgment and without trial, held for prisoner-plaintiff Taylor. The State of Nebraska, which may have had to end up paying the $23.50, appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth circuit. Without even bothering to write an opinion, that court affirmed the judgment. The Supreme Court, I am pleased to report, reversed: what Taylor had been deprived of, it said, was property, not a federal constitutional right; and for the restoration of his property, or its value, he could appeal to the Nebraska courts. Nebraska provided an appropriate tort remedy for this situation.

In the light of this case, and others that might be cited, the electorate would very likely agree with the Burger Court that prisoners ought not to enjoy Fourth Amendment privacy rights and that, to protect their property as well as their privacy, they be made to rely on the several remedies available under state law.

The Miranda rule case

THIS case began when, thirty minutes after midnight, a young woman ran up to a police car and told the officers she had been raped. She described her assailant and said he had gone into a nearby supermarket. The police radioed for assistance and drove to the supermarket. Officer Kraft spotted the man answering the description at the checkout counter; the man ran to the rear of the store, with Officer Kraft, gun drawn, in pursuit. Kraft caught him, frisked him, discovered an empty shoulder holster, and handcuffed him. Kraft then violated the *Miranda* rule: without reminding the suspect of his right to remain silent, he asked him where the gun was. The man nodded in the direction of some empty cartons saying, "The gun is over there." Kraft recovered the gun, a loaded .38 caliber revolver, formally put the man under arrest, and only then read him his *Miranda* rights. The man said he would answer questions without an attorney present and admitted to owning the gun.

In the subsequent prosecution for criminal possession of a weapon, the judge excluded the initial statement ("The gun is over there") as well as the gun; and, under the law as it then stood, the judge was right to do so. The Supreme Court, with three Justices dissenting, reversed. Justice Rehnquist's reasons for carving out an exception to the *Miranda* rule seem reasonable to me and I suspect would appear reasonable to a majority of my fellow citizens:

> The police in this case, in the very act of apprehending a suspect, were confronted with the immediate necessity of ascertaining the whereabouts of a gun which they had every reason to believe the suspect had just removed from his empty holster and discarded in the supermarket. So long as the gun was concealed somewhere in the supermarket, with its actual whereabouts unknown, it obviously posed more than one danger to the public safety: an accomplice might make use of it, a customer or employee might later come upon it.
>
> In such a situation, if the police are required to recite the familiar *Miranda* warnings before asking the whereabouts of the gun, suspects in [this] position might well be deterred from responding. Procedural safeguards which deter a suspect from responding were deemed acceptable in *Miranda* in order to protect the Fifth Amendment privilege; when the primary social cost of those added protections is the possibility of fewer convictions, the *Miranda* majority was willing to bear the cost. Here, had *Miranda* warnings deterred [the suspect] from responding to Officer Kraft's question about the whereabouts of the gun, the cost would have been something more than merely the failure to obtain evidence useful in convicting [the defendant]. Officer Kraft needed an answer to his question not simply to make his case against [the defendant] but to insure that further danger to the public did not result from the concealment of the gun in the public area.

The exclusionary rule case

THE Sheppard case, one of the two cases involving this issue, began on May 5, 1979, when the badly burned body of Sandra Boulware was discovered in a vacant lot in the Roxbury section of Boston. An autopsy revealed that she had died of multiple compound skull fractures caused by blows to the head. After a brief investigation, the police learned that Osborne Sheppard, "one of the victim's boyfriends," who claimed to have been at a local gaming house continuously during the time when the crime had been committed, had in fact borrowed a car "in order to give two men a ride home," and had been absent from the gaming house for about two hours. With the permission of its owner, the police searched the car and found bloodstains and pieces of hair on its rear bumper and in the trunk, where they also found strands of wire similar to those found on and near the body of the victim. The car's owner told the police that these items had not been present when he had last used the car.

On the basis of this evidence, Detective Peter O'Malley drafted an affidavit in support of an application for an arrest warrant and a warrant

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allowing the police to search Sheppard's residence; that affidavit described, with the particularity required by the Fourth Amendment, "the place to be searched [and] the things to be seized." To be more certain of this, he showed the affidavit to the district attorney, the district attorney's first assistant, and a sergeant, "who all concluded that it set forth probable cause for the search and the arrest." What followed is best described in the words of Justice White, who wrote the opinion of the Court:

> Because it was Sunday, the local court was closed, and the police had a difficult time finding a warrant application form. Detective O'Malley finally found a warrant form previously in use in the Dorchester District. The form was entitled "Search Warrant—Controlled Substance G.L.c. 276 §§ 1 through 3A." Realizing that some changes had to be made before the form could be used to authorize the search requested in the affidavit, Detective O'Malley deleted the subtitle "controlled substance" with a typewriter. He also substituted "Roxbury" for the printed "Dorchester" and typed Sheppard's name and address into blank spaces provided for that information. However, the reference to "controlled substance" was not deleted in the portion of the form that constituted the warrant application and that, when signed, would constitute the warrant itself.
>
> Detective O'Malley then took the affidavit and the warrant form to the residence of a judge who had consented to consider the warrant application. The judge examined the affidavit and stated that he would authorize the search as requested. Detective O'Malley offered the warrant form and stated that he knew the form as presented dealt with controlled substances. He showed the judge where he had crossed out the subtitles. After unsuccessfully searching for a more suitable form, the judge informed O'Malley that he would make the necessary changes so as to provide a proper search warrant. The judge then took the form, made some changes on it, and dated and signed the warrant. However, he did not change the substantive portion of the warrant, which continued to authorize a search for controlled substances; nor did he alter the form so as to incorporate the affidavit. The judge returned the affidavit and the warrant to O'Malley, informing him that the warrant was sufficient authority in form and content to carry out the search as requested. O'Malley took the two documents and accompanied by other officers, proceeded to Sheppard's residence. The scope of the ensuing search was limited to the items listed in the affidavit, and several incriminating pieces of evidence were discovered.

The evidence alluded to by Justice White included a pair of bloodstained boots, blood stains on the concrete floor of Sheppard's residence, a woman's earring with blood stains on it, a bloodstained envelope, a pair of men's jockey shorts and women's leotards with blood on them, three types of wire, "and a woman's hairpiece, subsequently identified as the victim's." Because the trial judge concluded that the police had acted in good faith in executing what they had good reason to believe was a valid warrant, he refused to suppress this evidence, and Sheppard was charged with, and subsequently convicted of, first-degree murder. This conviction was overturned on appeal by a divided state supreme court because, in its judgment, the Supreme Court of the United States would not recognize good-faith exceptions to the exclusionary rule. The Court has now corrected that interpretation.

One can dispute the number of otherwise guilty persons who are spared conviction because the prosecution is forbidden to introduce evidence illegally acquired, and those who have studied the question do dispute it; but there can be no doubt that, without this "good faith" exception to the exclusionary rule, Sheppard would escape punishment.

One can also argue, and Laurence Tribe does argue, that the virtue of the rule is that it protects innocent persons from illegal searches by the police; but that argument is not easily made. If no evidence is found—and none would be found in the possession of an innocent person—there is no evidence to exclude. And would the police be deterred from harassing an innocent householder, whom they happen to dislike, just because of a rule that prevents prosecutors from introducing evidence against presumably guilty householders?

Which brings us to the question of deterrence. Students have disputed whether the exclusionary rule actually deters police from conducting illegal searches against suspected criminals, but even the rule's most avid defenders admit the data do not show that the rule has "always or even often worked"; they also admit that the data do not "come close to supporting a claim that the rule wholly or largely works." And why should it work to deter police misbehavior? Its impact is felt by prosecutors, not by the police. But why should the *criminal* go free if the "constable" has blundered and, by this rule, cannot be prevented from blundering? (In the Sheppard case, of course, it was the judge and not the constable who blundered.) Why, indeed, when there is available to guilty and innocent alike a remedy that, because it can be applied directly to the police, is much more likely to deter their misconduct? Under section 1983, the victims of illegal searches and seizures can sue the policemen conducting them and, as was demonstrated in the first of the modern cases under this statute (*Monroe* v. *Pape*, 1961), they can win substantial damage awards. That would seem to be a more effective way of enforcing the Fourth Amendment.

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INEVITABLY, in this survey of recent Burger Court decisions I have tried to do more than demonstrate their probable popularity; I have also given reasons why, in my judgment, they were decided correctly. I have done so because, contrary to the liberal critics quoted, I do not believe that the rightness of a decision depends on its popularity or even its acceptability by the public. I hope also to have demonstrated that the shrill outcry that greeted the announcement of these decisions was unjustified. Liberty is not dead in this country, and the Burger Court has done nothing to put it on a course leading to its ultimate extinction or even tending in that direction.

It is more appropriate to wonder about the partisan critics of the Court, and whether liberty can survive unscathed their false and sometimes ridiculous cries of wolf. It was simply not "appalling" for the Court to allow Officer Kraft, before reading a suspect his *Miranda* rights, to ask that suspect where his gun was, and the Court was not initiating a police state when it allowed Detective O'Malley's evidence to be introduced in Sheppard's trial. Who can appreciate the supreme importance of free speech to free government if speech is given the form of sleeping in a public park? Such assertions serve to make liberty look ridiculous, to debase it in the same way bad money drives out the good. By persisting with its suit against Pawtucket and losing it, as it was warned it might, the ACLU succeeded mainly in depriving mayors and city councils around the country of their principal defense against importunate constituents who come with demands that, in one way or another, religion be accorded greater recognition; no longer can they say with any confidence that what is being demanded is unconstitutional. With reference to the student-draft case, do liberals really want the Constitution to embody the principle, the reverse of President Kennedy's, Ask not what you can do for your country, but only what your country can do for you?

As to the principles that *ought* to guide constitutional interpretation, discussion of that large and complex subject must be left for another day. Here I shall only say that the cause of constitutional government, and with it liberty, is not advanced by proposing that the Supreme Court follow the election returns.

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An Open Letter to Milan Kundera

Norman Podhoretz

DEAR MILAN KUNDERA:

About four years ago, a copy of the bound galleys of your novel, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, came into my office for review. As a magazine editor I get so many books every week in that form that unless I have a special reason I rarely do more than glance at their titles. In the case of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* I had no such special reason. By 1980 your name should have been more familiar to me, but in fact I had only a vague impression of you as an East European dissident*—so vague that, I am now ashamed to confess, I could not have said for certain which country you came from: Hungary? Yugoslavia? Czechoslovakia? Perhaps even Poland?

Nor was I particularly curious about you either as an individual or as a member of the class of "East" European dissident writers. This was not because I was or am unsympathetic to dissidents in Communist regimes or those living in exile in the West. On the contrary, as a passionate anti-Communist, I am all too sympathetic—at least for their own good as writers.

"How many books about the horrors of life under Communism am I supposed to read? How many ought I to read?" asks William F. Buckley, Jr., another member of the radically diminished fraternity of unregenerate anti-Communists in the American intellectual world. Like Buckley, I felt that there were a good many people who still needed to learn about "the horrors of life under Communism," but that I was not one of them. Pleased though I was to see books by dissidents from behind the Iron Curtain published and disseminated, I resisted reading any more of them myself.

What then induced me to begin reading *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*? I have no idea. Knowing your work as well as I do now, I can almost visualize myself as a character in a Kundera novel, standing in front of the cabinet in my office where review copies of new books are kept, suddenly being seized by one of them while you, the author, break into the picture to search speculatively for the cause. But whatever answer you might come up with, I have none. I simply do not know why I should have been drawn against so much resistance to *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. What I do know is that once I had begun reading it, I was transfixed.

Twenty-five years ago, as a young literary critic, I was sent an advance copy of a book of poems called *Life Studies*. It was by Robert Lowell, a poet already famous and much honored in America, but whose earlier work had generally left me cold. I therefore opened *Life Studies* with no great expectation of pleasure, but what I found there was more than pleasure. Reading it, I told Lowell in a note thanking him for the book, made me remember, as no other new volume of verse had for a long time, why I had become interested in poetry in the first place. That is exactly what *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* did for my old love of the novel—a love grown cold and stale and dutiful.

During my years as a literary critic, I specialized in contemporary fiction, and one of the reasons I eventually gave up on criticism was that the novels I was reading seemed to me less and less worth writing about. They might be more or less interesting, more or less amusing, but mostly they told me more about their authors, and less about life or the world, than I wanted or needed to know. Once upon a time the novel (as its English name suggests) had been a bringer of news; or (to put it in the terms you yourself use in a recent essay entitled "The Novel and Europe") its mission had been to "uncover a hitherto unknown segment of existence." But novel after novel was now "only confirming what had already been said."

That is how you characterize the "hundreds and thousands of novels published in huge editions and widely read in Communist Russia." But "confirming what had already been said" was precisely what most of the novels written and published in the democratic West, including many honored for boldness and originality, were also doing. This was the situation twenty years ago,

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* Since then you have taught me that the term East Europe is wrong because the countries in question belong to the West and that we should speak instead of Central Europe. But in 1980 I did not yet understand this.

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and it is perhaps even worse today. I do not, of course, mean that our novelists follow an official "party line," either directly or in some broader sense. What I do mean is that the most esteemed novels of our age in the West often seem to have as their main purpose the reinforcement of the by now endlessly reiterated idea that literary people are superior in every way to the businessmen, the politicians, the workers among whom they live—that they are more intelligent, more sensitive, and morally finer than everyone else.

You write, in the same essay from which I have just quoted, that "Every novel says to the reader: 'Things are not as simple as you think.'" This may be true of the best, the greatest, of novels. But it is not true of most contemporary American novels. Most contemporary American novels invite the reader to join with the author in a luxuriously complacent celebration of themselves and of the stock prejudices and bigotries of the "advanced" literary culture against the middle-class world around them. Flaubert could declare that *he* was Madame Bovary; the contemporary American novelist, faced with a modern-day equivalent of such a character, announces: How wonderful it is to have nothing whatever in common with this dull and inferior person.

In your essay on the novel you too bring up Flaubert and you credit him with discovering "the *terra* previously *incognita* of the everyday." But what "hitherto unknown segment of existence" did you discover in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*? In my opinion, the answer has to be: the distinctive things Communism does to the life—most notably the spiritual or cultural life—of a society. Before reading *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, I thought that a novel set in Communist Czechoslovakia could "only confirm what had already been said" and what I, as a convinced anti-Communist, had already taken in. William Buckley quite reasonably asks: "How is it possible for the thousandth exposé of life under Communism to be original?" But what you proved in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (and, I have since discovered, in some of your earlier novels like *The Joke* as well) is that it *is* possible to be original even in going over the most frequently trodden ground. You cite with approval "Hermann Broch's obstinately repeated point that the only *raison d'être* of a novel is to discover what can only be discovered by a novel," and your own novels are a splendid demonstration of that point.

If I were still a practicing literary critic, I would be obligated at this juncture to show how *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* achieves this marvelous result. To tell you the truth, though, even if I were not so rusty, I would have a hard time doing so. This is not an easy book to describe, let alone to analyze. Indeed, if I had not read it before the reviews came out, I would have been put off, and misled, by the terms in which they praised it.

Not that these terms were all inaccurate. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* assuredly is, in the words of one reviewer, "part fairy tale, part literary criticism, part political tract, part musicology, and part autobiography"; and I also agree with the same reviewer when he adds that "the whole is genius." Yet what compelled me most when I first opened *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* was not its form or its aesthetic character but its *intellectual* force, the astonishing intelligence controlling and suffusing every line.

The only other contemporary novelist I could think of with that kind of intellectual force, that degree of intelligence, was Saul Bellow. Like Bellow, you moved with easy freedom and complete authority through the world of ideas, and like him too you were often playful in the way you handled them. But in the end Bellow seemed always to be writing only about himself, composing endless and finally claustrophobic variations on the theme of Saul Bellow's sensibility. You too were a composer of variations; in fact, in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* itself you made so bold as to inform us that "This entire book is a novel in the form of variations." Yet even though you yourself, as Milan Kundera, kept making personal appearances in the course of which you talked about your own life or, again speaking frankly in your own name, delivered yourself of brilliant little essays about the history of Czechoslovakia, or of music, or of literature, *you*, Milan Kundera, were not the subject of this novel, or the "theme" of these variations. The theme was totalitarianism: what it is, what it does, where it comes from. But this was a novel, however free and easy in its formal syncretism, whose mission was "to discover what can only be discovered by a novel," and consequently all its terms were specified. Totalitarianism thus meant Communism, and more specifically Soviet Communism, and still more specifically Communism as imposed on Czechoslovakia, first in 1948 by a coup and then, twenty years later in 1968, by the power of Soviet tanks.

Nowadays it is generally held that Communism is born out of hunger and oppression, and in conspicuously failing to "confirm" that idea, you were to that extent being original. But to anyone familiar with the literature, what you had to say about Communism was not in itself new: that it arises out of the utopian fantasy of a return to Paradise; that it can brook no challenge to its certainties; that it cannot and will not tolerate pluralism either in the form of the independent individual or in the form of the unique national culture.

All these things had been said before—by Orwell, Koestler, Camus, and most recently Solzhenitsyn. Indeed, according to Solzhenitsyn, Com-

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munism has done to Russia itself exactly what you tell us it has done to Czechoslovakia and all the other peoples and nations that have been absorbed into the Soviet empire. From the point of view of those nations it is traditional Russian imperialism that has crushed the life out of them, but in Solzhenitsyn's eyes Russia itself is as much the victim of Communism as the countries of Central Europe.

In another of your essays, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," you lean toward the perspective of the enslaved countries in fixing the blame on Russia rather than Communism, and you also agree with the great Polish dissident Leszek Kolakowski when he criticizes Solzhenitsyn's "tendency to idealize czarism." Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is anti-Communist before it is anti-Russian. It begins not with Stalin but with the Czech Communist leader Klement Gottwald and the coup that brought Communism to power in Czechoslovakia, and you make it clear throughout that the utopian fantasies in whose service Czechoslovakia is gradually murdered as a nation come from within. It is only when the nation begins to awake and tries to save itself from the slow suicide it has been committing that the Soviet tanks are sent in.

Yet even though in one sense *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* said nothing new about Communism, in another sense it "discovered" Communism as surely as Flaubert "discovered" everyday life (about which, after all, *Madame Bovary* said nothing new, either). As I have already indicated, I find it very hard to understand how you were able to make the familiar seem unfamiliar and then to familiarize it anew with such great freshness and immediacy. Perhaps the answer lies in the unfamiliar form you created in which a number of apparently unrelated stories written in different literary genres ranging from the conventionally realistic to the surrealistic are strung together only by the author's direct intervention and a common theme which, however, is not even clearly visible in every case.

What, for example, connects Karel of Part II, who makes love simultaneously to his wife and his mistress as his aged mother sleeps in the next room, with Mirek of Part I, a disillusioned ex-Communist who gets six years in prison for trying to keep a careful record of events after the invasion of Czechoslovakia? Then there is the section about the student who rushes off to spend an evening getting drunk with a group of famous poets while a married woman he has been lusting after waits impatiently for him in his room. Why is the fairly straight comic realism of that section immediately followed by the grim Kafkaesque parable of the young woman who finds herself living in a world populated exclusively by little children ("angels") who at first worship and then finally torment her to death?

Whatever explanations subsequent analysis might yield, the fact is that those "brutal juxtapositions" make so powerful an effect on a first reading that they justify themselves before they are fully understood; and here too (at least so far as I personally was concerned) you prevailed against resistance. Nowadays my taste in fiction runs strongly to the realistic, and the enthusiasm I once felt for the experimental has waned as experimental writing has itself become both conventional and purposeless. But just as you have "discovered" Communism for the novel, so you have resurrected formal experimentation. The point of such experimentation was not originally to drive the novel out of the world it had been exploring for so long through the techniques and devices of realism; the point was to extend those techniques to previously unexplored regions of the inner life. What you say of Bartók, that he "knew how to discover the last original possibility in music based on the tonal principle," could be said of what Joyce, Kafka, and Proust were doing in relation to the fictional principle of verisimilitude. It can also, I believe, be said of you.

But since you yourself compare *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* to a piece of music, it seems appropriate to admit that in reading it I was not so much reminded of other modern novelists as of the tonal modernist composers who, no matter how dissonant and difficult they may be (some of Bartók's own string quartets are a good case in point), are still intelligible to the ear in a way that the atonal and serial composers are not, no matter how often one listens to their works. Bartók, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and your beloved Janáček all found new and striking means by which to make the familiar world of sound seem new—to bring it, as we say, back to life. And this, it seemed to me, was what you were doing to a familiar world of experience in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*.

A few weeks after I had finished reading it, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* was published in the United States, and to my amazement the reviewers were just as enthusiastic about it as I had been. If you are wondering why this should have amazed me, I will tell you frankly that I would not have expected the American literary world to applaud so outspokenly anti-Communist a book. In France, where you have been living since 1975, anti-Communism may lately have come into fashion among intellectuals, but here in the United States it has for some years been anathema to literary people—and to most other people who think of themselves as liberals or as "sophisticated" or both. Very few of these people are actually sympathetic to Communism, but even fewer of them take it seriously as a threat or even as a reality. They are convinced that no one in the Soviet Union, let alone the satellite countries, believes in Com-

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munism any longer, if they ever did; and as for the Third World, the Marxist-Leninists there are not really Communists (even to call them Communists is taken as a sign of political primitivism) but nationalists making use of a convenient rhetoric. Hence to be an anti-Communist is to be guilty of hating and fearing an illusion—or rather, the ghost of something that may once have existed but that has long since passed away.

In the view of most American literary people, however, anti-Communists are not merely suffering from paranoid delusions; they are also dangerous in that they tend to exaggerate the dimensions of the Soviet threat. Here again, just as very few of these people are pro-Communist, hardly a single one can be found who is openly or straightforwardly pro-Soviet. Once there were many defenders of and apologists for the Soviet Union in the American literary world, but that was a long time ago. In recent years it has been almost impossible to find a writer or a critic who will argue that the Soviet Union is building a workers' paradise or who will declare that Soviet domination of the countries of Central Europe is a good thing.

On the other hand, it is now the standard view that in its conflict with the West, or rather the United States, the Soviet Union is more sinned against than sinning. Everything the Soviets do (even the invasion of Afghanistan) is defensive or a reaction to an American provocation; and anything that cannot be explained away in these terms (the attempted assassination of the Pope, the cheating on arms-control agreements, the use of poison gas) is denied. The idea that seems self-evident to you (and to me), namely, that the Soviets are out to dominate the world, is regarded as too patently ridiculous even to be debated; it is dismissed either with a patronizing smile or with a show of incredulous indignation. One is permitted to criticize the Soviet Union as a "tyranny," but to see it as a threat is both to be paranoid and to feed Soviet paranoia, thereby increasing the risk of an all-out nuclear war.

Given this frame of mind, most reviewers might have been expected to bridle at the anti-Communism of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. But none of them did. Why? Possibly some or even all of them were so impressed with your novel as a work of art that they were willing to forgive or overlook its anti-Communism. Perhaps. But in any event—and this is a factor I should have anticipated but did not—as a Czech who has suffered and is now in exile, you have a license to be anti-Soviet and even anti-Communist. All Soviet or Central European dissidents are granted that license. By sympathizing with and celebrating dissident or refugee artists and intellectuals from the Communist world, literary people here can demonstrate (to themselves as much as to others) that their hatred of oppression extends to the Left no less than to the Right and that their love of literature also transcends political and ideological differences.

If you ask me what objection I or anyone else could conceivably have to such a lofty attitude, I will ask you in turn to reflect on the price that you yourself are paying for being treated in this way. In a piece about the reaction in France to your latest novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*,* Edmund White writes: "When faced with a figure such as Kundera, French leftists, eager to atone for former Soviet sympathies, begin to echo the unregenerate anti-Communism of Gaullists." The opposite has been true of the American reaction to your work. Here it has either become yet another occasion for sneering at "unregenerate anti-Communism" or else it has been described in the most disingenuously abstract terms available. You are writing about memory and laughter, about being and non-being, about love and sex, about angels and devils, about home and exile—about anything, in short, but the fate of Czechoslovakia under Communism and what that fate means, or should mean, to those of us living in the free world.

Thus one of your leftist admirers in America assures us that "Kundera refuses to settle into a complacency where answers come easy; no cold-war scold he. He subjects the 'free world's' contradictions to equally fierce scrutiny; the issues he confronts—the bearing of time, choice, and being—transcend time and place." Neither, according to another of your admirers who also puts derisive quotation marks around the phrase free world, do you detect any fundamental difference between the fate of literature under conditions of artistic freedom and what happens to it under Communist totalitarianism: "His need to experiment with form is surely connected to his personal vendetta against the puerilities of 'socialist realism' and its 'free world' counterparts."

WHAT is being done to you here, I have come to see, bears a macabre resemblance to what has been done posthumously to George Orwell. In Orwell's own lifetime, no one had any doubt that the species of totalitarianism he was warning against in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was Communism. Yet as we have all discovered from the endless discussions of that book occasioned by the coming of the real 1984, it is now interpreted and taught more as a warning against the United States than the Soviet Union. If the word Orwellian means turning things into their opposites ("war is peace," etc.), then Orwell himself has been Orwellianized—not by an all-powerful state in control of all means of expression and publication but by what Orwell himself called the "new aristocracy" of publicists and professors. This new aristocracy so dominates the centers in which opinion is shaped that it is able

* Harper & Row, 314 pp., $15.95.

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to distort the truth, especially about the past, to a degree that Orwell thought could never be reached so long as freedom of speech existed.

Like Orwell before you, you are obsessed with the theme of memory, and you believe with one of your characters "that the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." The power you have in mind is the political power of the totalitarian state, but what the case of Orwell so ironically and paradoxically and poignantly demonstrates is that in the democratic West the power against which memory must struggle is the *cultural* power of the "new aristocracy." This power, with no help whatever from the state (and indeed operating in opposition to the state), has taken the real Orwell, to whom nothing was more fundamental than the distinction between the free world and the Communist world, and sent him down the memory hole, while giving us in his place an Orwell who was neutral as between the United States and the Soviet Union and who saw no important differences between life in a Communist society and life in the democratic West.

Now that same power is trying to do the same thing to you. But of course this is an even more brazen operation. Orwell's grave has been robbed; you are being kidnapped.

WHEN I first thought of writing to you about this, I assumed that you would be appalled to learn how in America your work was falling into the hands of people who were using it for political purposes that you would surely consider pernicious. But now *I* am appalled to learn that you have been cooperating with your own kidnappers. "If I write a love story, and there are three lines about Stalin in that story," you tell the New York *Times Book Review*, "people will talk about the three lines and forget the rest, or read the rest for its political implications or as a metaphor for politics." But in America, once again, the opposite more nearly obtains: you write a book about Czechoslovakia under Communism containing three lines about love and everyone talks about those three lines and says that Czechoslovakia under Communism is a metaphor for life in the "free world" (in quotation marks of course). Or you write a novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, containing a brief episode in which an anti-Communist Czech émigré in Paris is seen by one of the characters as no different in kind from the Communists back in Prague (both being equally dogmatic), and virtually every reviewer gleefully cites it by way of suggesting that in your eyes Communism and anti-Communism are equivalent evils.

I think I can understand why a writer in exile from a Communist society should wish to turn his back on politics altogether, particularly where his own work is concerned. It is, after all, the essence of totalitarianism to politicize everything, most emphatically including the arts, and what better protest could there be against this distinctive species of tyranny than to insist on the reality and finally the superior importance of the nonpolitical in life? You are, for example, obviously fascinated by erotic experience in its own right and for its own sake, and that is why you write about it so much. Yet it is hard to escape the impression that sex also plays such a large role in your novels because under Communism it became the only area of privacy that remained relatively intact when everything else had become politicized. (Surely too you make fun of orgies and nude beaches because they represent an effort to turn sex into a servant of the utopian fantasies that Communism has failed to satisfy.)

But even greater than your passion for sex is your love of Western civilization, and especially its literature and its music. If I read you correctly, nothing that Communism has done, none of the crimes it has committed, not even the gulags it has created, seems to you worse than the war it has waged against Western culture. To you it is a war that goes beyond the stifling of free expression or the effort by the state to prescribe the very forms in which artists are permitted to work. It is *total* war. It involves the complete cultural annihilation by the Soviet Union of the countries of Central Europe, and this in turn—so you believe—represents the amputation of a vital part of Western civilization.

You make a powerful case in "The Tragedy of Central Europe" for the proposition that the countries of that area are "the cultural home" of the West. From this it follows that in acquiescing since Yalta in their absorption into the alien civilization of the East (alien because "Russian Communism vigorously reawakened Russia's old anti-Western obsessions and turned it brutally against Europe"), the West has shown that it no longer believes in the worth of its own civilization. The unity of the West was once based on religion; then religion "bowed out, giving way to culture, which became the expression of the supreme values by which European humanity understood itself, defined itself, identified itself as European." The tragedy of Central Europe has revealed that "Just as God long ago gave way to culture, culture in turn is giving way." To what? You do not say because you do not know. "I think I know only that culture has bowed out" in the West.

You do not explicitly add here that you for one are refusing to bow out, but you do tell us elsewhere that your supreme commitment is to the heritage of the European novel. You further give us to understand that as a novelist you mean to keep faith with your Central European heritage in particular—a heritage embodied in a "disabused view of history" and "the 'non-serious spirit' that mocks grandeur and glory." Summing it all up, you once responded to someone who

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had praised your first book as an indictment of Stalinism with the irritable remark: "Spare me your Stalinism. *The Joke* is a love story. . . . [It] is *merely* a novel."

Your love of culture, then, gives you a double incentive to deny the political dimension of your work. You wish to protect it from the "mindlessness of politicization," and at the same time to be anti-political is a way of *not* forgetting the murdered spirit of Czechoslovakia and the other countries of Central Europe which have now "disappeared from the map."

EVEN though I do not share your generally sour attitude toward religion, to all this I say: Yes, yes, and again yes. But I ask you, I implore you, to consider that by cooperating with those who have kidnapped your work, you are "bowing out" yourself. The testimony of the dissidents behind the Iron Curtain, whether they languish in prison or now live in the West, has played an immense role in forcing the intellectuals of Europe and America to think about the political values at stake in the conflict between East and West. Now you have come along and forced us all to begin thinking again (or perhaps for the first time) about the *cultural* dimension of this struggle. This has been the distinctive contribution, and the glory, of your work. Why then should you wish to encourage the agents of the very cultural abdication you deplore and mourn and lament? Why should you, of all writers, wish to be coopted by people who think there is no moral or political—or cultural—difference between West and East worth talking about, let alone fighting over? Why should you allow yourself to provide cover for people who think that Western civilization should not and cannot be defended?

You will perhaps answer in the words with which your essay on the novel concludes: "I am attached to nothing apart from the European novel," and that the "wisdom of the novel" requires skepticism as opposed to dogmatic certainty, the refusal to take sides, the raising of questions rather than the finding of answers. But let me remind you of what you also know—that the novel is devoted to exploring the concrete and the particular. Those on the American Left who have taken you up have been able to do so only by ignoring the novelistic essence of your work, its concreteness and its particularity: by robbing it (to adapt the guiding metaphor of your latest novel) of *weight*, by cutting it loose from the earth and letting it float high into a realm of comfortable abstractions in which all moral and political distinctions become invisible, and everything merges into "the unbearable lightness of being."

In the novel to which you give that phrase as a title, you profess uncertainty as to whether one should choose weight or lightness, but that novel itself, like your writing in general, belies the uncertainty. In your work you have chosen weight, which is to say the burdens of memory and the celebration of a "world of concrete living." Even your flirtation with the irresponsibilities of lightness paradoxically adds to that weight, deriving as it does from the heavy burden you have accepted of keeping the mocking and irreverent spirit of your culturally devastated homeland alive: a spirit that darkens the lightness of the laughter you so value and that throws the shadow of the gallows over the jokes you love to make.

You have declared in an interview that you want all of us in the West to understand what happened at Yalta, that it is necessary for "a Frenchman or an American . . . to know, to reason, to comprehend what is happening to, say, people in Czechoslovakia . . . so that his naiveté won't become his tragedy." It is for the sake of that necessary understanding that I beg you to stop giving aid and encouragement to the cultural powers who are using some of your own words to prevent your work from helping to alert a demoralized West to the dangers it faces from a self-imposed Yalta of its own.

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Why the Schools May Not Improve

Joseph Adelson

THE report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, has become so familiar since it was issued in 1983 that it is hard to remember how surprised we were when it appeared. Most of us interested in education were entirely unprepared for its tone and emphasis. It had been assumed we would get a characteristic product of the committee process —a report temperate and evenhanded, which might well mean, in practice, an exercise in the vacuous, the sententious, and the banal.

From what one could learn of the commission at work, there was little reason to hope otherwise. As it happens, I had been asked to write a position paper for the commission, hence was able to meet with the members formally and informally, and watch them take testimony, hear reports, question witnesses, and each other. During a long afternoon, one could see few signs of fire in anyone's belly. To the contrary, the commission membership appeared so diverse in background and disparate in views that an essentially political document, marked by restraint and compromise, seemed to be required if a report were to be issued at all. The commission's able staff had been assiduous in providing the widest possible variety of data and opinion: work showing that American youngsters were doing very poorly in international comparisons was balanced by arguments that those findings were weak, misleading, and not to be taken too seriously. A pessimistic paper on American education, such as my own, would be offset by an exceedingly optimistic one. All in all, it seemed likely that the struggle to strengthen the schools would not gain much from the commission, that its report would, at best, provoke the usual one-day Washington flurry, then be forgotten.

II

THE first surprise, then, was that the commission somehow managed to transcend those inclinations toward caution, to write a report that was straightforward, outspoken, at moments nearly fierce. The second surprise was the acclaim it received, and the—continuing—attention it gained for the problems of American education. Why a chronic crisis is suddenly perceived to be acute; why one event strikes a nerve while another, similar event does not; why we unexpectedly develop the collective conviction that *something must be done*—those are the mysteries of the *Zeitgeist*, penetrable only by hindsight, if then.

It is important to bear in mind that the report made no new discoveries. The sorry state of the American schools had been evident for many years. If there was a true mystery, it was not that the report said what it did, or attracted attention, but why it had taken so long, why enlightened opinion had not previously been fully engaged. One could hear a good deal about the problem privately—parents retelling some of the hair-raising stories brought home by their children, or college teachers reporting the most recent solecisms encountered in student compositions. There is a local teacher who compiles a catalogue of the worst howlers he has come across in papers graded during the past year; he distributes it to colleagues, to their vast amusement; and one senses they laugh to keep from crying, there being nothing quite so frustrating as the semi-literacy they confront almost daily.

Nor was the plight of the schools known only privately; not at all. A number of journalists—notably Gilbert Sewall of *Newsweek* and Gene Maeroff of the New York *Times*—had been writing trenchant stories (later books) on the problems of education, and what might be done about them. There had even come to be an annual ritual—a story reporting the latest decline in SAT scores. Another annual event was the Gallup poll of public opinion about the schools—sometimes slightly up, sometimes down, but on the whole bleak. In a number of state legislatures, plans for the competence testing of high-school seniors were being debated, at times carried out. Looking back, we can now see that by the late 1970's, a critical mass of writers, intellectuals, and academics—few of them entrenched within the education establishment—were beginning to be heard on the failures of the schools: Diane Ravitch, Chester E. Finn, Jr., Dennis Doyle, Tommy Tomlinson. And at the very

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end of that decade, one was aware that a number of large studies of high schools were under way—by James Coleman, Gerald Grant, John Goodlad, Ernest Boyer, Theodore Sizer—all initiated by a mounting uneasiness about the condition of secondary education.

So there were many straws in the wind; but then there always are. At the time, it took great optimism to believe that we would soon see fundamental changes in thinking about the schools, let alone changes in practice. There were bureaucracies to be found at all levels of the education system, from the local to the national—and they tended to be sluggish, defensive, unwilling to undertake change, unable to grasp the nature of the complaints being made, or too preoccupied with finances and housekeeping to give more than cursory attention to issues of pedagogy.

If the bureaucrats of education were generally inert, the *soi-disant* intellectuals—scholars and theorists—were likely to be testy and aggressive. The disinterested observer could sense in them an emotional raggedness, a quick-on-the-trigger sensitivity to criticism. They often saw themselves as samurai who had been given the task of defending the system that had emerged during the 1960's. The system, one would be told, might have its faults, but nevertheless represented a triumph of humane values and democratic ideals. Threats to the system were seen to be political in inspiration. In private conversation, one would sometimes hear amazing things said: that there was an orgy of book-burning in the schools set in motion by the Moral Majority; or that the high schools had no function except to keep youngsters out of the labor market, so as to maximize corporate profits.

Public discourse was generally more guarded, but even there it was not difficult to perceive an embittered ideological animus, two noteworthy examples being the efforts to discredit Marva Collins's work in her Chicago school, and the innuendo and obloquy which greeted the important Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore research on high-school achievement. With hindsight, once again, it might appear that so much touchiness bespoke a dwindling sense of inner confidence; but the more common reaction was to despair for the immediate future of education, dominated as it appeared to be by a curious mixture of mediocrity (in personnel, techniques, and ideas) and ideology (egalitarian, individualistic, utopian).

Another reason for pessimism was that many defenders of education would hint that the critics were actuated not by politics alone, but also by a covert racism. To worry openly about the collapse of cognitive skills was taken to be a surreptitious way of questioning the competence of blacks. To be sure, there were enough instances of poor black performance to warrant alarm about their schooling; but the general level of intellectual quality was at least equally worrisome. A university professor might, for example, read a term paper containing serious grammatical errors in almost every sentence, then learn that the writer was a college senior with a high grade-point average, preparing to attend graduate school, the child of a successful professional, and a graduate of a fast-track suburban high school. Or be asked to sign a permission slip drafted by another college senior (white, middle class) containing three spelling mistakes in two sentences ("herby," "permision," "signiture").

In fact, the problem of black achievement is less troubling, because it is less puzzling. But how is one to understand a youngster who has had the best of everything, yet after sixteen years of schooling is unable to write a comprehensible sentence? And how is one to understand an educational system which passes such a youngster through a competitive high school, a selective university, and into a good graduate program? Race was only one of the many questions troubling the critics, yet the conversation on educational quality was conducted so allusively and so euphemistically that it often proved difficult to make that plain.

A final reason for pessimism: the critics of the schools were not themselves powerfully situated, and, looking about them, did not see the prospect of strong institutional support. Above all, they found themselves thwarted and puzzled by the indifference of the universities. After all, it was higher education which felt most directly the failings of the schools; yet those failings did not become a matter of institutional concern. It was not hard to see why: the universities felt that the schools—and even more, their ecology, the schools of education, and the teacher-training apparatuses, and the accreditation procedures—were a briar patch of ineptitude, stubbornness, and entrenched interests—unreformable, hopeless, best left alone. So there would be little help from higher education.

Then *A Nation at Risk* took the nation by storm. Against all expectations, the nerve had been struck. A public long unhappy about the schools, but held at bay by bureaucratic inertia, intimidated by expert opinion, kept in check by a solipsistic legal system, had at long last found its own interests voiced, and by the most unlikely agent of redemption, the federal government. Other reports were to appear in the following months—Goodlad, Boyer, Sizer—but the commission, in preceding them, also adumbrated them, or seemed to, so that these later works were accommodated into the "paradigm" already established. A bandwagon was soon rolling: the pundits and politicians who had shown no previous interest in education, let alone its quality, quickly added their voices. So did, *mirabile dictu*, the National Education Association, until that moment noted only for a fastidious distaste for the idea of excellence, thought to be elitist, perhaps illiberal.

Yet these elements, the opportunistic and the

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merely fashionable, were only the smallest part of the reaction. What seemed far more important were the actions taken locally or at the state level to revamp curricula and to increase requirements for graduation. Even such actions, important as they were, were understood to be surrogates for those changes of the spirit felt to be really needed. They were to serve to signal parents and teachers and the young themselves of the communal wish to be—once again—serious about schooling. There was to be more time devoted to academic subjects, there was to be more homework given, and done. When feasible economically, the school year and school day were to be lengthened. There were to be orderly classrooms, and more systematic, focused, attentive instruction.

The tide had turned. Perhaps there would be further struggles, even some minor setbacks; but now it seemed clear to all that corrupt progressivism, the dominating mode in American education, had had its moment, had failed wretchedly, had been seen to fail, and knew itself to have failed. What many parents suspected, and what many teachers knew in their bones, was confirmed each time new findings appeared. For example:

The number of American youngsters scoring over 650 on the verbal portion of the SAT declined 45 percent in the ten-year period from 1972 to 1982.

In the most meticulous cross-national research yet carried out, comparing American, Japanese, and Taiwanese children, Harold Stevenson found that in mathematics "only one American child appeared among the top one hundred fifth graders," and "among the twenty American fifth-grade classrooms, in not one classroom was the average score on the mathematics test equivalent to that of the children in the worst-performing Japanese classroom."

Stevenson's prose is unemotional, yet even so he terms these (and similar) findings "devastating," as indeed they are, made the more so by the fact that the American children were more advantaged than their Asian counterparts, coming from well-educated families, and attending much smaller classes. Still, one felt that the pain occasioned by these findings could be borne, given the belief that reform was at hand.

III

THE third surprise—a most unpleasant one—was the slowly dawning recognition that the tide may not have turned after all, that despite the reports and the resolve, the movement for reform might well be blunted, that the disarray of its opponents, though real enough, had been only momentary, that the forces against reform were unpersuaded and unchastened.

As soon as the reform of education became a public issue, one began to notice efforts, witting or not, to change the subject, to divert the discussion to other questions. The most obvious form this took was political: each presidential candidate, declared and undeclared, rushed into speech. Planks were drafted, platforms rewritten. The true course of education had been subverted/had been enhanced/would be moved forward by the new/old administration. New programs were needed. New programs were not needed. More money was needed. More money was not needed. In other instances the discussion was moved to issues closer to education yet secondary in importance. Merit pay for teachers: it may or may not be a good idea, but it is hard to see its importance. It is hard to see how, even over time, it would produce a significant improvement in teaching and learning. Yet the issue of merit pay, pro and con, absorbed a considerable amount of discussion and debate. Another example was the controversy about the competence-testing of current teachers. It is hard to see what effect it would have beyond harassing an already beleaguered group.

Another diversion was that many of those strongly in favor of academic reform also favored, quite as strongly, some other purpose for the schools, usually moralistic: prayer; monitoring the school libraries; scrutinizing the curriculum in sex education, or getting rid of it altogether; getting rid of the relativistic approach to moral education; teaching values through literature or philosophy; and so on. Most of us will find some of these proposals lamentable, and others laudable; the problem was that their being linked to academic reform tended to confound separate domains, and much of the time tended to alienate one or another type of parent, e.g., those who might favor intellectual achievement yet were modernist (or traditionalist) in moral outlook.

These diversions and confoundings were more annoying than disturbing, were disturbing only insofar as they suggested an increased diffusion of purpose. What was troubling, and unexpected, was the appearance of rhetorical strategies which seemed to aim at denying the very existence of problems in education. In various ways, these problems were said never to have existed, to have been trumped up, to have been trivial, to have been distorted, to have been misunderstood, to be only a small part of the total picture, to be a thing of the past, and so on. To a clinical psychologist like myself, these devices seemed eerily familiar: denial, negation, splitting, externalization, displacement. For the last few months I have been noting examples of these defensive tactics as they appear in the press. Here are the major themes:

Things really aren't so bad: stories reporting that though there may be minor problems in the schools, these have "been blown up out of proportion."

Some things may not be good, but other things are first-rate: upbeat accounts of successful ventures, aiming to provide "a balanced picture."

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Those who criticize the schools do so out of base motives: these stories personalize, drawing attention away from the problem itself and toward the personality of the critic. A choice example is this statement from a press release: "A large part of the public's confusion [i.e., why it mistakenly believes there are problems in the schools] comes from university scholars trying to attract attention to themselves." The speaker is President Derek Bok of Harvard, the celebrated shrinking violet.

Perhaps things were bad at one time, but that was long ago: stories which historicize the schools' problems, suggesting they are safely in the past, and long since resolved. This motif usually accompanies enthusiastic accounts of new approaches to familiar difficulties. A recent example can be found in *Time*'s account of the Reagan administration's calling attention to discipline problems in American schools. The story stresses the "dismay" of educators at the President's initiative, argues that the administration's data are dated, and offers in rebuttal several heartwarming anecdotes about chaotic schools now become pacific. In fact, the data are not all that dated, and are the most recent findings available; the story offers no newer evidence, aside from those anecdotes and some indignant opinions. The thrust of the story is to suggest, quite incorrectly, that discipline is no longer a problem in the schools.

Finally, and above all: *those who criticize the schools have a political end in mind. They are trying to turn back the clock.*

THIS last theme, openly ideological, deserves our close attention. Some of the motifs mentioned earlier seem to have little behind them; they are efforts at amnesia, or simple outbursts of Pollyannaism. But the ideological strategy is another matter entirely. It is principled; it is determined; it is intelligent; it is adversarial. It takes the view that reform is reaction, that the pursuit of excellence will endanger worthier ideals, that the movement for reform is a stalking horse for the recrudescence of dangerous values. The reform proposals are seen not merely as misguided, but illegitimate, a subversion of the proper ideals of American education. The position taken is *revanchiste*: the new era must be resisted, then overturned.

In the softer, attenuated version, the *revanchiste* idea is not carried to its limits: changes must be made, yet without giving up the accomplishments of the past. We see its quintessential expression in the press release mentioned earlier, chronicling the outcome of a summit meeting of thirty-nine university presidents who, prompted by the public concern about education, convened and considered and conceived ten recommendations for the universities, each and every one vapid, self-important, and condescending: "Providing opportunities for the continued professional development of superintendents, principals, and other school leaders"; "strengthening existing affiliations with elementary and secondary schools or initiating new ones"; "serving, where needed, as sources of advice in the shaping of public policies affecting education." And so on.

One would not expect much bite or penetration from a summit-level communiqué, and certainly not one issued by university presidents. Still, one had hoped for a bit more than these fatuities. No institution is more grievously harmed by the erosion of talent this nation is witnessing, and one might presume the universities would see it as their duty to preserve and support that talent. Yet we find that the presidents give almost no attention to what caused the fuss in the first place. The concern rather is to allay anxiety, since "too uniformly gloomy" a picture has been painted for the public. We are reminded that the "significant achievements" of the recent past must not be forgotten; these consist of improving achievement in younger children (in fact, an arguable conclusion) and "improving access" to the schools.

Anyone steeped in current education commentary is soon aware of the word "access"—generally preceded by "providing" or "improving"—part buzz word, part code word, and a delicate way of adverting to universal secondary education, and more particularly the presence of blacks and other minorities in the senior grades of high schools and colleges. It is the succinct expression of a somewhat more complicated idea: that there is an implacable trade-off between excellence and equality (now more commonly called "equity"), so that encouraging a democratic school system produces a decline in achievement. Equality means leveling, which in turn means intellectual mediocrity (of course, it is not put so crudely); mediocrity is the price we pay for universal education. That is by no means a new idea; to the contrary, it is a very old, conservative idea, albeit with a somewhat different moral emphasis. It has now become the conventional establishment-liberal idea. One can understand its appeal. It is centrist, moderate, enlightened, above all symmetrical: excellence and equity in balance, on a seesaw, so that a rise in one virtue induces a fall in the other.

It is also a comforting idea, permitting one to take long views, and to look well past today's troubles. Unfortunately, it is more appealing than useful as an explanation of intellectual decline. Even if we limit ourselves to the two findings mentioned above, it is plain enough that widened access has little to do with it. The American portion of the cross-national study was conducted in Minneapolis, which has few minority families. The sharp decline in top SAT scores cannot have been much affected by universal secondary schooling. For some years now, poor American performance in international comparisons has been explained by the high retention rates in our secondary schools, but other countries—notably Japan

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—now show similar rates, while maintaining much higher standards of achievement.

NEVERTHELESS, the fear of excellence is real enough, when the case can be made that the disadvantaged are at risk. Here, for example, is the story of a contretemps now taking place in my own community in Michigan, as reported by one of the local newspapers: it tells us a great deal about what can intervene between intention and outcome when higher standards are sought. The school administration had proposed some modest increases in high-school graduation requirements, essentially along the lines suggested by the various commission reports. No matter that they were modest; there was an immediate uproar. The plan agitated "angry teachers," who were said to consider it "simplistic." It was also deemed reactionary: a high-school principal is reported as saying that it reminded him of the curriculum of twenty years ago.

The new plan would require three years of math and science, so that "even marginal students would have to pass basic chemistry, physics, algebra, geometry, and logic to gain their diplomas." That might well raise the dropout rate, now very low. Mandating courses might mean eliminating electives, which students are said to like. "Electives have pizzazz," a teacher is said to have said. Besides, college-bound students already take many courses in science and math, so why have requirements? Besides, the teachers are angry because they were not adequately consulted. Besides, the community is angry because it was not adequately consulted. Besides, the administration's proposal evades the real issue, which is the presence among students of "passivity, apathy, linear thinking, and dependence on authority." A local professor of education is quoted to this effect, along with the observation that what is really needed, before we rush into things, is—more research, to tell us how to "involve students more deeply in learning." The story concludes with an attack upon *A Nation at Risk*, depicted as the *fons et origo* of the nation's descent into pedagogical darkness.

One finds it hard to imagine that such arguments could delay change. Given the national climate of opinion, who would not support so slight an elevation in requirements? Yet the school administration surrendered immediately, putting up no resistance. It appointed a forty-person committee, representing teachers, students, and "the community," deputed to draft a new curriculum. That committee would in turn break up into smaller groups to hold public meetings, hear witnesses, draft reports, etc., etc., until ultimately changes would—or perhaps would not—emerge.

One also finds it hard to imagine that this farrago of shopworn and discredited ideas retains the power to compel belief. Yet the ideology persists, undaunted. In one of its major variations—liberationist—it holds that traditional schooling enslaves the spirit. Though we may achieve a rapid acquisition of skills, we do so at a terrible cost in creativity, independence of mind, joy in learning. The criticisms commonly directed against liberationist practice, that it encourages ignorance and intellectual incapacity, are treated disdainfully, it being the view that objective methods of assessment are both invalid and morally meretricious. Traditional schooling is seen to reflect an unwholesome devotion to such values as "cognitivism" and social Darwinism. The critic, in short, is seen to be a fusion of Gradgrind and Snopes.

In the Left variations, class or ethnicity outweigh all else. Here is a capsule summary of the position: "The schools are one way the privileged have chosen to intimidate, humiliate, emasculate the poor and the blacks. Tests, grades, and the like are of no moment, since they do not relate to the actual conditions these youngsters will confront—unemployment or a continuing economic degradation. Tests are little more than a means of oppressing the victims, then blaming them. All the talk about discipline is a smokescreen. It is based on straight racial bias, and is a subterfuge for getting rid of the blacks. If there are real problems, which is doubtful, they developed because the true needs of disadvantaged youngsters are not being met."

The two variations are united in a disdain for the idea of merit. In the liberationist view, the striving for merit is seen to diminish any love for the activity itself. In the Left view, that striving produces differences in rank, distasteful and unjustly achieved, with those beginning behind destined to remain behind. The use of "merit" as a term of abuse now extends to "excellence" itself, to judge by the scorn conveyed by Irving Howe and others at a recent conference of intellectuals; and it should be no surprise to us that at least one speaker at that meeting singled out the commission's report as an example of a deplorable drift in American life.

IV

"GIVEN the will power, we have the knowledge to increase school learning, and raise our national achievement standards."

Reading that sentence prompted a moment of surprise. It is from congressional testimony given by H.J. Walberg, a leading researcher on classroom learning. What surprised me was not the statement itself, which is unquestionably correct, as Walberg's excellent review of the literature has shown; it was the term "will power," a term so old-fashioned, so nearly anachronistic that one will rarely see it used, certainly not by an academician. Yet when that brief instant of surprise had passed, it struck me that "will power" or some equivalent—effort, drive, energy, commitment—some word connoting intention and purpose, would indeed be needed in discussing both the

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immediate past and the probable future of American education.

We are, of course, more comfortable in discussing these matters by reference to tangibles: the economy, the labor market, demographics, and so on. What will the supply of teachers look like in the next decade, and what incentives will be available to increase it? Are there changes in prospect for school financing? What would be the impact of tuition-tax credits in states willing to adopt them? These "realities" are or will be of vital importance in understanding the present and future of American schooling. Who can doubt that the outflow of talented women to other professions has had—and will continue to have—a profound effect on teaching quality? Who can deny that many of the problems of the schools have been due to the population anomalies of the last generation: larger families and crowded age cohorts, which contribute in the first case to lowered intellectual capacity, and in the second, to a staggering increase in such pathologies as drug use, criminal violence, and illegitimate births, all of these having the deepest impact on the climate of schooling? It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the lowering of family size and birth rate, though little noted by writers on education up until now, will likely be the single most important benign influence on American schooling in the next decade.

Nevertheless, there seems to be no calculus of tangibles which allows us to comprehend fully the debacle of American schooling in the recent past. But my underlying argument here is that it is far more important to understand those ideas, true ones or false ones, which allow us either to overcome or to succumb to the hard facts of life—above all, the ideologies and illusions, the illusions fed by ideologies and the ideologies fed by illusions.

At almost every moment during the last two decades, the schools and the young have been held hostage to our fantasies. Why in the world did so many university professors allow themselves to believe that the college students of the 1960's and '70's were so remarkably gifted? They were not, yet that illusion contributed to grade inflation at the universities, which led in turn to the despoliation of the high-school curriculum. Why did so many social scientists—many of them familiar with the psychometric literature—allow themselves to believe that minority students functioning two standard deviations below the mean in aptitude and achievement would nevertheless do successful work in the most competitive graduate and professional programs? Why did we believe that schools incapable of teaching correct spelling would nevertheless be able to convey the highest degree of moral, psychological, and social insight? Why were we unable to perceive and reflect upon the uncertain relationship between schooling and later achievement—why it is that a James Joyce could be delivered out of the most rigid Jesuitical circumstances, whereas a hundred Summerhills have yet to deliver a James Joyce? Why did it require an accumulation of empirical work to confirm the obvious, that learning is best achieved, given enough time and enough effort, in an orderly milieu; and why has that simple finding been met with such outrage and condemnation?

A final question: why did some of us develop the illusion that these and like illusions would be easy to overcome? Why did we assume that the exposure of false doctrine to experience, or to careful empirical test, would be sufficient to change belief? I would guess we assumed so out of innocence and wishful thinking, almost as a counterpart to the innocence and wishful thinking in the utopian ideas we ourselves sought to correct and overcome. We were also too drawn to the metaphor of the pendulum, the view that cultural and intellectual life moves regularly from one pole to another. Although that view is by no means entirely false, our error was in failing to grasp the many ways in which ideologies are embodied in human lives. They provide a career, or a personal identity, or a badge of status, or a measure of religious faith. We did not anticipate how much would be at stake, hence how bitter the struggle would be. Least of all did we expect to lose that struggle as, it now seems, we may finally do.

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How to Rescue International Law

Gidon Gottlieb

RECENT EVENTS in Grenada and Nicaragua have reinforced a growing belief that the United States is losing faith in the system of collective security, international organizations, and treaties established after World War II; that it has abandoned the concept that international relations can and should be governed by a regime of international law. The most eloquent statement of this view was made by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in his recent book, *Loyalties.**
Of course the tradition that gives pride of place to law among the instruments of social policy has not been shared by everyone in America. Indeed, the roster of dissenters is a distinguished one, and it includes names like Dean Acheson, George Kennan, and Hans Morgenthau. Still, faith in international law *has* been characteristic of the United States and this faith does now seem to be fading.

The reasons it is fading are clear. The impotence of the international legal order in the face of new forms of warfare—among them nuclear intimidation, state-supported terrorism, criminal conduct by diplomats, hostage-taking, and "revolution without frontiers"—is plain for all to see. The legal restraints on the use of force have broadly functioned to provide rogue states like Libya, Syria, and Iran with a legal shield from armed reprisals and other effective sanctions, behind which they have been able to persist in policies of terror and aggression. The acts of these states have revived the question debated in the 19th century as to whether the same legal code could govern relations among all nations. John Stuart Mill wrote:

> To suppose that the same international customs, and the same rules of international morality can obtain between one civilized nation and another, and between civilized nations and barbarians, is a grave error, and one which no statesman can fall into. . . . The rules of ordinary international morality imply reciprocity. But the barbarians will not reciprocate. . . .

The deterioration of the constitutional environment in the United Nations system has also been a factor in the erosion of American faith in international law. For the belief that the procedures and institutions of liberal democracy could function in the international arena has simply not been vindicated. In a recent article, Leo Gross, after reviewing some of the abuses committed in the United Nations, in the International Atomic Energy Agency, in UNESCO, and in the International Labor Organization, concluded:

> If the United States and other members are serious about preserving the rule of law and preventing a further degradation of the constitutional environment of the United Nations and its agencies, . . . they will have to vote, regretfully perhaps, more often "with their feet," as the saying goes, and with their purse, and not merely with their voices or hands.

Another profound reason for disenchantment is the international double standard evident in the work of the United Nations. This much-discussed problem is the result of the tenacious hold over most agencies in the United Nations system exercised by a stable coalition of totalitarian, authoritarian, and military governments associated with the Soviet bloc and with the Arab-African group.

Personal contacts with the often urbane and cultivated diplomats of some of these regimes can make it difficult to believe that horrors are committed by their governments at home. This was also the experience of those in the 1930's who dealt with the highly educated professionals of the Wilhelmstrasse and who did not therefore initially give credence to the ugly reports about the Nazi regime. Yet no international organization can escape the character stamped upon it by the regimes that constitute it, notwithstanding the selflessness and idealism of its more distinguished civil servants. Behind the decorum and gentility of multilateral diplomacy lies the reality of rulers like Amin, Bokassa, Pol Pot, Pinochet, Qaddafi, Assad, and Khomeini, to name but a select few with the lives of countless victims on their conscience. Regimes that are systematically indifferent to the requirements of the rule of law in their own countries are unlikely to be rallied to that principle in the international arena. The acts of such regimes, inside or outside the UN, cannot be endowed with either moral or political legitimacy.

BETWEEN them, the United States and its allies have been subjected by the UN system to every variety of claim calculated to dis-

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courage, inhibit, and impair the legitimacy of resistance to the many modes of international offense they have had to face. The sophisticated juridical arguments developed for this purpose in the international community have often found a ready audience in the United States. Each one represents a professional contribution to the culture of appeasement, and together they go a long way toward accounting for the loss of faith in the United Nations system. A few illustrations will make the point.

In situations where liberation movements enjoy a sanctuary beyond an international line which they cross at will, impossible standards of proof have been set to determine when an armed attack that triggers the right of self-defense has actually occurred. In the Vietnam conflict, the United States' claim that infiltration from north of the DMZ had acquired such proportions as to amount to an armed attack on the South was systematically resisted despite persuasive evidence.

Impossible standards of proof have also been set to establish an overwhelming, imminent danger that would warrant preventive action. Israel's raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor was broadly condemned despite Iraq's refusal to sign even an armistice agreement, its announced goal of destroying Israel, and the ruthlessness of its regime. It is interesting to speculate on what the arguments against such a raid would be after Iraq's use of chemical weapons. Israel's preemptive strike may have averted an Iraqi nuclear attack on Iran, a case of unintentional collective self-defense.

The difficulty of "proving" that an initial unlawful foreign intervention had occurred was one of the juridical problems that the United States faced in the Grenada operation. Responsibility for the murder of a head of government is not easy to establish and it is still difficult to determine who was behind the assassination of Maurice Bishop. The murder of Amin in Afghanistan, the attempt on the life of the Pope, and the murder of South Korean ministers in 1983 are all instances of foreign intervention that leave the victim state few meaningful responses.

Another difficulty in the struggle against foreign intervention is the invocation of nonintervention treaty clauses to inhibit countermoves. In the Grenada affair, provisions of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) were cited to challenge the legality of the invitation to the United States extended by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. A literal and mechanical reading of the OAS documents by critics of the invasion managed to overlook the fundamental purpose and object of the OAS, which was designed as a regional security organization to make the Americas secure from Communism and foreign intervention; distinguished international lawyers managed to interpret the OAS Charter so as to protect a Soviet-supported outpost in the hemisphere from counterintervention.

A common United Nations practice that inhibits defensive moves is to condemn "evenhandedly" armed attacks by terrorists and the measures of deterrence taken against them. The United Nations usually insists on neutrality between the aggressor and the victim who is struggling back. Thus the sordid acts of terror directed at civilians in Israel are usually followed by Israeli strikes at guerrilla bases and by condemnatory Security Council resolutions. The pattern is well-known. The United Nations took no action with regard to the unlawful agreement that allowed the PLO to wage an armed struggle against Israel from bases in Lebanon. But Israel's defensive actions were condemned.

On other occasions the Security Council remained silent while an armed attack was in progress but demanded an urgent cease-fire when the tides of war had turned and the attacking forces were beaten back. The Council's actions in the 1973 Yom Kippur war are enlightening on this issue.

The right of a state to strike back against an act of war or an act of aggression short of an armed attack, or to rescue its citizens unlawfully endangered in a foreign country, has also been denied. Thus attacks on an embassy or on a ship on the high seas, or the closure of international straits, which can constitute acts of war under classical international law, are treated by the UN as mere "disputes" subject to the ineffective Charter provisions for peaceful settlement.

In a recent instance (in which the West for a change was not targeted) Iraq had the audacity to suggest that the question of whether it had launched an invasion of Iran—an invasion as blatant as any since World War II—should be arbitrated. In another situation, the United Nations called on Great Britain to negotiate with Argentina on the future of the Falklands after Argentina had failed in its grotesque and bloody invasion. In similar fashion, in the 1967 war in the Middle East that engulfed the West Bank after Jordan decided to join in the attack on Israel, the United Nations demanded that Israel return to Jordan territories that Jordan had itself seized by force in 1948 and later annexed.

In despair over the double standards and pernicious practices of the United Nations, some may be tempted to dismiss the whole paraphernalia of law and international institutions whose centrality to world affairs is in any event not clearly demonstrated. But such an attitude cannot serve any serious conception of the American national interest.

Issues of legitimacy and lawfulness involve more than the approval or disapproval of the small community with an interest in international law. Indifference to these questions allows domestic and foreign critics to seize on international law as a club with which to beat the United States. More significantly, perhaps, in turning a deaf ear to the diplomatic criticism of allies, it reflects a readiness for unilateral action, for going it alone.

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In diplomacy, this connotation of unilateralism or isolationism is difficult to escape. International law is unlike domestic law in that it emanates not from the will of some legislature or ruling officials, but rather is shorthand for the past agreements and commitments of a state. Hence violations do not so much suggest "disobedience" as unreliability or bad faith. For the law violated is not that of some superior authority; it is one's own pledge and bond. The Charter of the United Nations and the elaboration of its principles in the Declaration on Friendly Relations were crafted by the United States in concert with others. They represent a U.S. commitment to the principles that should govern the use of force internationally. These cannot be abandoned or ignored without calling into question the good faith of the U.S. when it puts its signature to a document.

Genuine allies can be embarrassed when faced with resolutions condemning the U.S. on the basis of well-entrenched principles and stubborn facts, while lukewarm supporters will find a ready excuse for abandoning the U.S., arguing the irresistibility of principles universally accepted. The same function for international law, in making and unmaking alliances and coalitions, can also be found, though to a lesser degree, in the parliamentary bodies of the free world. It provides a standard by which to measure, criticize, and assess the foreign policy of a nation. A free press will latch on to these self-same standards that are, moreover, easy for newsmen to work with.

In short, the significance of international law for the creation of a climate of opinion must not be underrated. The slow detachment of a government from serious discourse about international legality will eventually undermine the support it enjoys at home, even among its own officials whose training in following and obeying rules makes them peculiarly sensitive to these matters.

In the United States there is yet one further reason for taking international law seriously. Not only is it interwoven into the Constitution, which establishes treaties as the supreme law of the land; but law and legal considerations are also part and parcel of what, in the United States, plays the role of ideology. Claims, conflicts, entitlements, rights, and so on are all settled by reference to law. The resolution of conflicts is given a legal cast, and constitutional government is government under law. In a society such as this, to single out a branch of law to be treated less seriously than others is no small matter.

Since international legitimacy and the rule of law remain essential, and since they cannot any longer be reconciled with the practices of the United Nations, courage is required to cut the tie between the two great ideas that have informed the American tradition: the rule of law and faith in international organizations. This does not necessarily require a U.S. withdrawal from the UN; it could mean allowing the UN to sink into the relative obscurity it has so amply earned. The point is to salvage the principles of the Charter from the way they have come to be applied by the political organs of the UN.

IF THIS is to be done successfully, however, the rule of law itself will need to be understood in a new way as well. First of all, it will have to be established that in the nuclear age, international political stability has become a requirement of the higher morality, serving as it does to prevent nuclear war by design or miscalculation. This is a 20th-century contribution to Natural Law, to a supreme law that must prevail over other policies and interests of the international community. The rules for avoiding nuclear conflicts must be both paramount and *a priori*, derived as they are from the imperative of survival.

So long as the U.S. enjoyed nuclear superiority, Soviet efforts to upset the world balance in Korea, Cuba, Berlin, and the Middle East could be countered with moderate risks of a wider war. Despite its early overwhelming nuclear advantage, the United States at no time attempted to roll back the Soviet empire and to liberate the countries of Eastern Europe. But Soviet efforts to upset the global balance continue.

These efforts are being carried out by the Soviet Union under the banner of "parity" with the United States. This is a doctrine that has not received the attention it merits, for it is not directly related to Communist ideology. Nor has it been widely analyzed in terms of its political as distinct from military implications.

The image of a conservative and inefficient global power headed by a collective leadership of tired old men conceals the truly revolutionary implications of "parity" as understood by the Soviets. The Soviet Union's claim to the status of a global power co-equal with the United States serves to legitimate Soviet meddling in *every* region of the globe. This doctrine purports to grant the USSR the same political status which the United States had acquired at the close of World War II, to bestow on the Soviet Union the political position which the United States reaped as a result of its victory over the Axis in Europe and in Asia and as part of its historical influence in the Western Hemisphere.

Correlatively, parity with the United States in the *military* domain—accepted as the basis of the SALT process—has been translated by the Soviet leadership to mean parity in global reach, in the projection of power and influence, in regions in which imperial Russia had never dreamed of a say: the South Atlantic, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia. Nothing illustrates this more graphically than the patterns of deployment of the Soviet navy which was a coastal force as recently as the 1960's and which now roams all the oceans.

The doctrine of parity, the claim to political equality with the United States, is even more far-reaching than the ideological claims of Communism. For it has permitted the Soviet Union in just

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a few years to shift from a defense of its interests in the Eurasian land mass to a claim of influence on every continent and in every ocean. I cannot think of a historical precedent for such an abrupt escalation of political ambition. A power that was until recently "merely" a vast continental empire exercising its domain from the heart of Germany to Alaska, which made its presence felt in all the regions surrounding this immense perimeter, from the Mediterranean to India and to the Sea of Japan—this power is now aspiring to influence everywhere, anywhere.

The formal challenge to world political stability expressed in the Soviet doctrine of parity—a big-power doctrine if ever there was one—is reinforced by the Communist theory of wars of national liberation. The combination of these two doctrines reflects the amplitude of the Soviet challenge to the existing international equilibrium. The ideological—as distinct from the big-power—challenge to this balance was well expressed by Boris Ponomarev of the Politburo, who proclaimed that the boundaries of socialism's concerns include the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Where the doctrine of parity calls for the projection of a Soviet military presence around the globe, socialist internationalism calls for the utilization of this might to protect the newly established outposts of Marxism-Leninism in the Third World. The combination of the two is formidable.

Finally, there is the Soviet use of military power for *political* ends: the massive build-up of nuclear forces for political intimidation designed to wreck the Atlantic alliance, to decouple the defense of Europe from that of the United States, and to neutralize Western Europe. This is to be achieved by leaving the Europeans with *no possibility of a credible defense* against absolutely overwhelming Soviet nuclear and conventional power.

Such a strategy became feasible as soon as the Soviet Union had acquired nuclear parity with the United States, thus weakening the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella over Europe in the face of the undeniable superiority of the Warsaw Pact in conventional forces. The massive build-up of Soviet intermediate missiles—the SS-20's—took place *after* Leonid Brezhnev had told the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1978 that there was then an approximate balance of forces in Europe. But if, by Brezhnev's own admission, there was a broad balance *before* the Soviets began to mass their new missiles, what legitimate defensive reason could they have had for this new deployment? Could there have been any motive other than an attempt to disrupt the global equilibrium, to split NATO, to neutralize Western Europe, and to isolate the United States from its principal allies?

Moscow was confident that it could exploit the pacifist and neutralist currents of opinion in Germany and the Low Countries to block a counter-deployment of American missiles. It tried to do so with a frenetic political campaign of threats and with the inducement of freer human contacts between the two Germanys. So far, the result of this Soviet campaign has been a much higher level of nuclear armaments on both sides, a reduced warning time for missiles, and a frayed East-West relationship. But Moscow still sticks to its hopes that it will yet be able to halt or even reverse the counterdeployment of the Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles that began only in 1984, well after the Soviet rockets were in place.

These Soviet assaults on the global balance bring the world closer to war at a time when the American margin of safety has disappeared and the danger of miscalculation has increased. Preserving stability thus must be seen as the foremost requirement of international law in the nuclear age.

A LEADING advocate of nuclear disarmament carries the logic of stability even further. For Jonathan Schell, stability is "a supreme good."* He argues that the avoidance of a nuclear catastrophe demands that the political stalemate between the nuclear powers be accepted and even formalized, since any significant attempt to break the stalemate is likely to lead to conflicts that can drag the powers into generalized warfare:

> Our method can be to convert into a settlement in principle the settlement of political differences which we have achieved in fact under the pressure of the nuclear threat. . . . We can, in a manner of speaking, adopt our world, with all its injustices and other imperfections, as our ideal and then seek the most sensible and moderate means of preserving it. . . . Not improvement [of life] but mere continuation is our dream.

In other words, according to Schell, the preservation of life on earth requires the formalization of spheres of influence between the great nuclear powers. Yet international lawyers tend to regard the "spheres of influence" approach as nothing less than a challenge to the rule of law: to the principles of nonintervention, of sovereign equality and self-determination, which were erected and buttressed by the weaker members of the international community as a shield against the powerful presence of dominant neighbors. The concept of spheres of influence is also rejected by all who profess (in the words of Richard Gardner) "a principled concern for freedom and human rights in all parts of the world, from Poland and Grenada to Tibet and Cambodia."

The notion of spheres of influence is rejected on other grounds by the Kissinger commission on Central America:

> [The Soviets] would welcome discussions about superpower spheres of influence, which would prompt Soviet assertions of primacy and the need for U.S. abstention on the Soviet periphery

* *The Abolition*, Knopf, 173 pp., $11.95.

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in such places as Eastern Europe and Afghanistan. For the United States, however, such a concept of spheres of influence is unacceptable. Should the United States now accept that concept, the Soviet Union would reap substantial gains.

But the Kissinger report also goes on to explain how civil war in tiny and obscure republics can affect the whole spectrum of global relations:

> The ability of the United States to sustain a tolerable balance of power on the global scene at a manageable cost depends on the inherent security of its land borders. This advantage is of crucial importance. It offsets an otherwise serious liability: our distance from Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, which are also of strategic concern to the United States. Security commitments in those areas require the United States to supply its forces overseas at the far end of transoceanic lines of communication whose protection can be almost as costly as the forces themselves. . . . At the level of global strategy, therefore, the advance of Soviet and Cuban power on the American mainland affects the global balance. . . . From the standpoint of the Soviet Union, it would be a major strategic coup to impose on the United States the burden of defending our southern approaches, thereby stripping us of the compensating advantage that offsets the burden of our transoceanic lines of communication.

The Kissinger report here confirms what has been obvious to students of international affairs for a long time, that a deterioration of the security conditions on the "southern approaches" to the United States would weaken America's ability to stand by its allies overseas. Shortly before his death, Raymond Aron observed:

> If Mexico succumbs some day to the revolutionary tidal wave, the world geopolitical map will be in tatters. The United States, compelled to defend an indefensible frontier, will lose the privilege of a superpower's insularity, and the "enemy" will already be considered to be inside the gates, among the millions of Mexican immigrants, both legal and illegal.

Global stability does depend on the capacity of the United States to keep its southern approaches as open and undefended as the Canadian border. A Soviet-Cuban attempt to change the nature of these "southern approaches" can lead to a wider war. Military actions involving Cuba and Nicaragua could make for a repeat of the 1962 missile crisis—but with an even greater potential for miscalculation this time around.

In the nuclear age, the prevention of this danger is what should give international legitimacy to an American policy aimed at halting "the advance of Soviet and Cuban power on the American mainland" and thereby preserving international stability.

Unlike the concept of spheres of influence, the pursuit of stability can claim international legitimacy because it respects the self-determination of peoples and the political independence of states. It prohibits foreign attempts to impose particular regimes or to destabilize freely elected governments (which alone can claim rights vested by international law in the *people* of a country). The pursuit of stability also respects the duty not to intervene in the domestic affairs of states. Counterintervention is allowed only to deny the success of a prior foreign intervention. Insistence on stability does not freeze the domestic status quo in any nation, but it denies the right of outside powers to intervene except at the request of the lawful government. It thus tends to insulate every struggle for domestic change from the broader East-West conflict.

Finally, international legitimacy can be strengthened by fidelity to the principle of reciprocity which remains the guarantor of the effectiveness of international obligations. That principle includes the right of states to defend themselves also against unlawful acts short of a full-fledged armed attack, within the constraints of proportionality and necessity.

Reciprocity does not signify, as Richard Gardner argues, "a tit-for-tat rejection of legal restraints on the use of force—'you invaded Afghanistan so we can invade anyone we like.'" It is not to be confused with unlawful reprisals and acts of vengeance. Nor is the doctrine of reciprocity a mere technical requirement derived by analogy from common-law rules of contract. On the contrary, reciprocity lies at the very foundation of international law itself. In the international arena reciprocity is the true guarantor of obligations; it performs the function that enforcement assumes in the legal order of the state. The maintenance of a particular mode of relations (other than subjugation and war) between states inextricably involved with one another on many different planes requires mutual respect for the obligations that define the relationship. The failure to insist on mutuality in the observance of international duties saps the integrity of relationships and the effectiveness of the legal principles that states have agreed upon between themselves. To forsake mutuality in the management of relations between states is to plant the seeds of that degenerative disease of the international system—the double standard.

It is this disease that has destroyed the authority of the United Nations and perverted the very idea of international law. If international law is to regain its authority, it will have to do so outside the framework of the UN system and on terms that make it possible for the democracies to defend international stability against the various forms of terror and violence directed at them by the Soviet Union and other lawless states.

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Of Arms, Men & Monuments

Tod Lindberg

THE Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. was controversial from the moment it was put forward as an idea; the controversy increased when the sponsors unveiled the design, and abated slightly only when the completed memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day 1982. The monument consists of two black highly polished triangular granite walls, their bases set at right angles in a shallow depression in the earth. The upper sides of the two triangles are even with the level of the ground. The lower sides, ten-feet deep where the triangles join, ascend to ground level at the vertices. Along the two-hundred-foot length of each wall are carved the names of the nearly 58,000 Americans who died in the war, arranged according to chronological order of death.

William Hubbard, an architect and the most eloquent critic of the memorial, has described the controversy:

> The objections to the monument were, in essence, that it did not glorify the war in ways that other monuments had—the Iwo Jima Monument being one frequently cited example. Now clearly a monument equating Vietnam with World War II . . . would have been a sham, a lie. But behind the call for glorification is the assumption that a monument—any monument—should make concrete some shared idea about the thing it commemorates. In short, a monument should *speak*. In that sense, the objections stand unaddressed: The Vietnam monument does not speak. Indeed the designer, Maya Ying Lin, has said that she intended a monument that "would not tell you how to think" about the Vietnam war.

Hubbard goes on to place the Vietnam Veterans Memorial within the context of modern art—in particular of modern public sculpture and memorials—and to contrast that with an art that *does* "make concrete some shared idea about the thing it commemorates." What the old art had, and what the new art—including the Vietnam monument—explicitly repudiates, is "the idea that art works can provide guidance in human dilemmas.... We take from the monument not a resolution of our conflicting emotions over the war, but an intensified, vivified version of those emotions."

Hubbard is right about the sharp contrast between the Vietnam monument and the national war memorials that preceded it; but there remains a sense in which it *is* speaking, and speaking clearly. The guidelines of the competition that led to the selection of Maya Ying Lin's design specified a fundamental requirement: that all proposals include the names of each of the 58,000 who died in the war. It is this that constitutes the difference between the Vietnam memorial and the great national war memorials that came before. The Iwo Jima Monument, sculpted from a famous World War II photograph, depicts five anonymous soldiers heroically raising the American flag in the heat of battle. The greatest monument of all, the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery, is a testament to those who, in the end anonymously (for that is ultimately what may be required), gave life for country. The 58,000 names of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial say precisely the opposite: these are the individuals who died.

BY NOW, the idea is quite familiar that in order fully to understand the meaning of a war, one must see it from the perspective of the combat soldier. This, after all, was the animating characteristic of much media coverage of Vietnam. *Newsweek*, for example, in the section of the magazine devoted each week to "The War in Vietnam," often published accounts like this one (from November 1, 1965):

> From the shore, the guerrillas cut loose with a torrent of heavy-weapons and small-arms fire that churned up the water around the patrol. The fourth boat in line rocked drunkenly as three recoilless rifle rounds tore into it. Its captain, bleeding from shrapnel wounds, yelled into his radio, "Help me, help me. All of us are wounded or killed and we are sinking." As he spoke, the boat swung out of control and ran aground.

This style, bringing the reader into the combat zone in order to see the violence and destruction of the war, was also popular in more prestigious journals like the *New Yorker*, which in 1967 published Jonathan Schell's "The Village of Ben Suc,"

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a graphic chronicle of the efforts of United States and South Vietnamese forces to rid a village on the Saigon River of the Vietcong.

Perhaps the most vivid and personal perspective on soldiers at war was to be found in *Life*. The photographs from the war that *Life* published were in many instances unforgettable, and the texts that accompanied them were evidently intended to rival them in intimacy. One remarkable example was the cover feature of the issue dated January 21, 1972. On a black background lay an official army portrait of a smiling young man. The cover text read: "The One Boy Who Died—A Week's Dead in Vietnam—SP4 Jerry N. Duffey, 1951-1971, Charlotte, Michigan." Inside, the story included an account of his death:

> Thirty minutes after midnight on Dec. 12—at 11:30 A.M., Dec. 11 in Charlotte, Michigan—Acting Sergeant Jerry N. Duffey pulled on his clothes, laced up his jungle boots and took his place as guard sergeant for the shift they call "the graveyard watch" on Hill 131. It was a moonless night, especially dark without the perimeter lights. Thirty-three minutes later, while Jerry was in a hootch, a devastating mortar barrage pounded the lonely garrison. Twenty VC sappers slipped through the jagged wire and systematically blew up buildings with their satchel charges. It was over in twenty minutes. The hilltop was ablaze. Nine of the 17 GI's were injured and Jerry Duffey was dead—three days before he was to go home for Christmas and, as it turned out, just nineteen days before Hill 131 was to be turned over to the South Vietnamese.

IF INTIMATE portraiture of this kind was a staple of magazine journalism, television news offered a technologically more advanced version of the same thing. In Vietnam, for the first time, camera crews were on hand to cover the war as its major events and battles occurred. They enjoyed remarkably easy and uncensored access to the combat zones, and the footage subsequently broadcast showed the soldier in action as he had never been seen before. The cameras brought the audience into the middle of firefights, artillery barrages, napalm attacks, and helicopter assaults; in the aftermath, the cameras might linger both on the material wreckage and on the dead and wounded.

The effect of such televised scenes on the civilians who see them has come to be taken very seriously by those who must think about the conduct of war. The governments of the United States and Great Britain, in the cases of the invasion of Grenada and the Falklands campaign, took fairly elaborate precautions to insure that television audiences were not exposed to scenes of too much bloodshed. (In countries with no free press, the concern has been even more evident.) Reviewing the reasons for America's failure in Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, the commander of U.S. forces there through mid-1968, and such commentators and analysts as Robert Elegant and George F. Will, have made much of the effects of television coverage on the war effort. The extent to which the airing of combat footage influenced both public opinion and the subsequent conduct of the war is now a subject of heated debate.

According to George Will, if television had been on hand at the time of Antietam, "America's bloodiest day," the United States would now be two countries. Elegant, a foreign correspondent who covered the Vietnam war for *Newsweek* and the Los Angeles *Times*/Washington *Post* News Service, wrote in a controversial 1981 article in *Encounter*:

> For the first time in modern history, the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield, but on the printed page and, above all, on the television screen. . . . Television, its thrusting and simplistic character shaping its message, was most shocking because it was most immediate.

Others, however, disagree. Lawrence W. Lichty, a consultant to the recent PBS series, *Vietnam: A Television History*, notes that "only 3 percent of the [television] stories contained combat footage, and only 2 percent showed any dead or wounded." From this, he concludes that the political effects of these images could not have been great. (Television's real impact, he says, was as a medium for bringing presidential speeches to the people; support for both Johnson and Nixon rose after each televised address.) Michael Mandelbaum, in "Vietnam: The Television War" (*Daedalus*, Fall 1982), argues that "The networks simply presented a series of images, mainly of Americans fighting an unseen foe. . . . Images themselves ordinarily carry no explicit message. The impression they leave depends on the interpretive framework the viewer brings to them." According to Mandelbaum, there is no empirical evidence, in the form of public-opinion data, for the proposition that seeing the violence of combat turned Americans against the war: "In its absence, it is just as plausible that television promoted support for the war as that it generated opposition."

In this view, television offers no more than the latest version of an older journalistic mode, a mode that had long placed writers (and, later, photographers) in the trenches with the soldiers to add a human-interest element to the coverage of war. And it is certainly true that from the time of the Greeks and the Bible on, this element has formed an important part of any war story, useful in drawing out the larger themes. But that is just the point. Americans, during the course of both world wars, were often reminded of the sacrifices U.S. soldiers were making, and the dangers they faced; the message, however, was that these men were undergoing these trials for the sake of the people at home, so that their freedom would be preserved in a time of great peril. The combat scene pre-

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served in the Iwo Jima Monument conveys the same lesson—a lesson similarly taught by countless generations of war books for adolescent boys, a genre that makes use of the soldier's perspective to celebrate the glories of combat and patriotic valor.

In simply showing combat footage from the Vietnam war, television news was remarkably *un*-mediated. Politics aside, television film crews go where they can; the footage that results—whatever one might say about the commentary that accompanies it, or the criteria by which it is selected for airing—has an unprecedented claim to "objectivity" and "truth." Then, too, the Vietnam war was distinctive in that the nation's political leadership failed to offer a consistent explanation of our purposes, while the antiwar movement was vociferously opposed to the government's actions *whatever* their purpose might be. Both these circumstances lent greater weight to the "truth" represented by the images of the media.

In defense of the television coverage of Vietnam —it is a defense of the print media as well—Lawrence Lichty and others imply that there was no neglect of the broader issues of the war. They are certainly correct to suggest that much media coverage focused on the national political leaders who assessed, explained, attacked, or defended the war. But against this cacophony of conflicting interpretation and articulation of the war's broader meaning, the media, by their own means, also brought us one fixed clarity. Whatever Johnson, Westmoreland, or Nixon might say—or Tom Hayden, Eugene McCarthy, or George McGovern—there remained the blunter truth of the combat footage giving us the most direct possible experience of the war. This footage legitimized the radical personalization of war, the dissociation of the soldier from any larger issue or cause. And it had, in the main, one thing to say: that war, from the point of view of the soldiers experiencing it, is a brutal affair, and a brutalizing one.

Now this perspective has come virtually to dominate American discussion of war: in books and journals, in novels and poetry, in histories both of the Vietnam war and other wars, in the movies and on television, and, certainly most importantly, in political debate itself.

A few examples will suffice. On television, there was the most successful entertainment series of the 1970's, *M*A*S*H*, now widely syndicated. The setting was an army hospital not far from the front lines of the Korean war. Weekly, there came before us a parade of wounded soldiers, their lives to be saved or not to be saved by the proficient doctors and nurses. Those who saw the wounded and dying men were in a position to see war as it is, and there were we as well. One highly-praised episode was actually filmed from a wounded soldier's point of view; the camera, into which the other characters spoke directly, represented the soldier: what it saw was meant to be what he saw, its movements were meant to be his own.

The doctors on *M*A*S*H*, it is true, were officers; but they were by no means commanders, and on the several occasions we did see commanders, their presence was meant to point out, to comic or tragic effect, just how far removed from reality they were. Of presidents or generals, or for that matter of the North Korean enemy, there was nearly nothing but an infrequent mention on the curiously untinny hospital loudspeaker.

The Day After, a television movie whose audience almost (though not quite) matched the extent of the publicity generated on its behalf, brought us a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The setting was Lawrence, Kansas; again there were no presidents, no generals, no political issues, no strategies. Instead, there were missile silos that unleashed their contents and were in turn destroyed alongside the soldiers who attended them and most of the surrounding population. The main character, again a doctor, and himself dying of radiation poisoning, devoted his last days to caring for and comforting those who had survived the blasts; it was they who were the unwilling combatants in this horrible war; and it was their suffering with which this television movie was exclusively concerned. (It is a concern shared by Jonathan Schell in *The Fate of the Earth*, the first half of which is a meticulously detailed portrait of nuclear war's devastation, and the extinction of human life that ensues.)

Like previous wars, Vietnam has produced a number of veteran-novelists. C.D.B. Bryan, the author of *Friendly Fire*, a nonfiction account of a young soldier killed in Vietnam by American shelling (later made into a television movie starring Carol Burnett as the young man's mother), has described the typical Vietnam narrative in these terms:

> A young white male . . . enlists in the army. . . . He arrives [in Vietnam] nervous, excited, eager, wanting to do good, to *be* good, feeling he is fulfilling part of his destiny, and within forty-eight hours he is sent to a combat unit to replace a kid who didn't last long enough for anyone to learn his name. The kid made a mistake, our young man is told, the kind of mistake that gets people killed. . . . Before the end, of course, there is the first patrol, which our young man goes out on as though he were going to a movie until all hell breaks loose and suddenly he is in the movie and it is more real than anything he has ever experienced. . . . There is the atrocity scene, to demonstrate that My Lai was not an isolated incident. . . . There are helicopter assaults into hot LZ's [landing zones] . . . and then there are the battle scenes. . . . The Generic Vietnam War Narrative charts the gradual deterioration of order, the disintegration of idealism, the breakdown of character, the alienation from those at home, and, finally, the loss of all sensibility save the will to survive.

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Bryan means no particular disrespect in offering his generic description; indeed, he professes a high regard for several Vietnam books—he names *Fields of Fire* by James Webb, *The 13th Valley* by John Del Vecchio, *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo, and *Fragments* by Jack Fuller. But his generic account is an accurate one. What we have in the narratives he discusses are soldiers in combat, and alone; missing are officers in charge of operations at a level higher than that of the platoon, to say nothing of strategists or politicians. And the Vietnam novels do seem preoccupied with the "deterioration" and "disintegration" of the soldier to the exclusion of all else.

As with novels, so with memoirs. A helicopter pilot named Robert Mason has recently published *Chickenhawk*, an often tedious account of his experience flying soldiers into and out of patrol areas. He too makes the case for understanding the war from the soldier's point of view:

> The local war, the one I was in, went on every day. I was part of it. In the air, I did my job the best I knew how. I flew, as did all pilots, into hot LZ's, because in the middle of the confusion the hazy principles over which the war was fought disappeared. Everything else was excluded.

Near the end of his time in Vietnam, Mason reports, he began to have nightmares, which continued when he returned to the United States. His deterioration eventually caused him to be grounded from flying helicopters, and he quit the army. The last two paragraphs of the book inform us that he was convicted of trying to smuggle marijuana into the U.S., and was free pending appeal. That the war was psychologically devastating to him is irrefutable: he, after all, was there.

In the case of historical and other social-scientific works, the situation is slightly more complicated. One pattern is to employ the soldier's perspective as a kind of coda: such is Robert L. Pisor's *The End of the Line*, a much praised popular history of the North Vietnamese siege of the American base at Khe Sanh, the prelude to the Tet offensive of 1968. Pisor does have conventional chapters on the American and North Vietnamese purposes before and after the siege, and does offer sketches of the principal soldiers, General Westmoreland and the North Vietnamese commander, Vo Nguyen Giap. But in the last narrative chapter, "Body Counts," the focus shifts. The official number of dead during the siege was placed at 205 Americans, 1,602 North Vietnamese. Pisor, with reason, believes the official numbers do not tell the whole story, and in this chapter he describes and lists, sometimes by name, those dead he knows were not included. By this device, the book becomes, retroactively, primarily the story of the dead.

Oral histories of the Vietnam war are also common. In 1983, *Newsweek* arranged to reunite the surviving members of a company of soldiers who were in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969. The magazine devoted a long cover story to this reunion, including lengthy reports on the soldiers' recollection of the war; the article was subsequently expanded and published as *Charlie Company: What the Vietnam War Did to Us*. There is also another new book, *Long Time Passing*, by Myra MacPherson, which records at some length the thoughts and recollections both of those who fought in the war and of those who opposed it in America. The book means to explore the lasting trauma of the experience of the war on these people—the "haunted generation," as the subtitle has it. Quoting Studs Terkel, Miss MacPherson refers to those she has interviewed as "my 'improvised battalion of survivors.'" In *Bloods*, Wallace Terry, a journalist, has given us the experience of the Vietnam war as told by a dozen black soldiers. Finally, Carol Mithers, in a recent issue of the *Village Voice*, has charged a sexist America with forgetting that 10,000 of the three million Americans who served in Vietnam were women, mostly nurses; to rectify this, she has interviewed a few of them, recording their impressions of the gruesome scenes at the army hospitals and describing the lasting traumatic effects these experiences had on them.

On television news, the pattern set by the reporting from Vietnam has continued largely undisturbed, most notably in the coverage of the war in Lebanon and the U.S. "peacekeeping" efforts there. Newsmen conducted any number of interviews with U.S. Marines on the scene, at the conclusion of which the television correspondents usually stressed the alleged desire of the soldiers—all the soldiers—to return home.

What is even more striking is the extent to which the rhetoric of American politicians has come to rely on this point of view, justified by a concern for the effects of combat on the individual soldier. One finds it throughout the political spectrum. Senator Barry Goldwater, urging the return of our troops from Lebanon, was a noteworthy exemplar from the Right. But there can be no doubt that in its contemporary usage its longest lineage is in the Democratic party. Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy spoke in these terms quite early; in his 1972 campaign for the Presidency, George McGovern, with his "Come Home, America" slogan, focused exclusively on the wish to get the boys out of the Vietnam combat zone. Jimmy Carter's proudest achievement, as he himself noted on more than one occasion (prior, that is, to the failed attempt to rescue the hostages in Iran), was that no American had died in combat during his Presidency. More recently, Walter Mondale has declared himself foursquare against any plan "to send American boys to fight and die in Central America."

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On the basis of the evidence, it would seem fair to associate most invocations of the combat soldier's perspective with an antiwar position. There is indeed a strong element of that here, and it has a pedigree that goes back in this century alone to a great deal of the literature that came out of World War I (Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, E.E. Cummings, *et al.*). In earlier periods, however, such sentiments were for the most part restricted to the literary elites, and did not penetrate into other areas of the culture. Today, thanks mainly to television, they have become common coin.

Yet there is something else at work in the widespread emphasis on the soldier's experience besides antiwar or pacifist ideas. What is at work is a decisively apolitical, or even anti-political, impulse: an attempt to sever the soldier from *any* connection with his nation's purposes and policies. In the new understanding, soldiers are no longer agents of their country but simply individuals caught in extremely trying circumstances. If they fight, they fight to stay alive, or perhaps, at best, to keep their friends alive. If they kill, they may justly be called murderers (this was how many soldiers returning from Vietnam were greeted on their arrival home), or, perhaps, victims of a higher senselessness. If they die, they die for nothing, victims again—this time the same as civilian victims of violent crime. They are private men.

Those who employ the soldier's perspective have often claimed to be doing so for the soldiers' own sake—to tell their stories, lest we forget them. But without the context supplied by political understanding, no moral credit can in fact attach itself to the soldier's efforts. Conversely, no moral blame can attach itself to a civilian noncombatant. What is actually being offered in these representations is thus an elaborate justification for those who did *not* serve. They may even receive the nod, on prudential grounds, for having had the sense to avoid purposeless danger. That they inhabit no lower a moral plane than those who fought is the meaning of Myra MacPherson's characterization of *everyone* from that time—soldier and civilian alike—as a "survivor."

Unfortunately for this whole view of things, it seems that many soldiers themselves feel otherwise. John Wheeler, who was chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and served in Vietnam beginning in 1969, has recently published *Touched with Fire: The Future of the Vietnam Generation*. Startlingly (if one has been relying on the evidence I have so far been discussing), Wheeler stresses not the depersonalization but the solidarity felt among soldiers in the combat zone; even more startlingly, he emphasizes the lengths to which the military went to insure that the soldiers were well equipped, received their mail from home, and so on—all the ways in which the nation tried to see to it that the men did not feel isolated, but connected to a larger whole.

Similarly lost to view in the now generally accepted wisdom about men at war is the fact that many soldiers *like* being soldiers very much—not primarily because the military will teach them a skill, or provide them with a start on their careers, but because they are eager to serve their country, believe there is something worth fighting for, and even relish an opportunity to risk their lives in that cause. Combat, as Wheeler notes, is a test of bravery, courage, and commitment, and soldiers see it as such. Notwithstanding the repeated assertion of television news crews in Beirut that the Marines there were eager to return home, thousands of Marines *requested* duty in Lebanon, many of them repeatedly, and enlistments in the Corps *increased* after the airport bombing that left 241 of its number dead.

Is there a way to speak honestly about men at war? One cannot simply shun mention of the violence and brutality that is undeniably part of their experience, because the cameras will soon be on hand to bring it all home. But one can explain how and why such violence is necessary, and thereby help to restore the soldier to his proper status as an agent, sometimes a heroic agent, of broader political and moral principles. This is something that American leaders during the Vietnam war conspicuously failed to do. But the speech given by Ronald Reagan on October 27, 1983, explaining and defending U.S. policy in the immediate aftermath of the invasion of Grenada and the bombing at Beirut's airport, offered a reminder of how it was once done and could be done again:

> May I share something with you that I think you'd like to know? It's something that happened to the Commandant of our Marine Corps, General Paul Kelley, while he was visiting our critically injured Marines in an Air Force hospital. It says more than any of us ever could about the gallantry and heroism of these young men, young men who served so willingly so that others might have a chance at peace and freedom in their own lives and in the life of their country.
>
> I will let General Kelley's words describe the incident. He spoke of "a young Marine with more tubes going in and out of his body than I've ever seen in one body. He could not see very well. He reached up and grabbed my four stars, just to make sure I was who I said I was. He held my hand with a firm grip. He was making signals and we realized he wanted to tell me something. We put a pad of paper in his hand—and he wrote: 'Semper fi.'"
>
> Well, if you have been a Marine or if, like myself, you are an admirer of the Marines, you know these words are a battle cry, a greeting, and a legend in the Marine Corps. They are Marine shorthand for the motto of the Corps—Semper Fidelis—"Always Faithful."
>
> General Kelley has a reputation for being a very sophisticated general and a very tough Marine. But he cried when he saw those words,

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and who can blame him? That Marine, and all those others like him living and dead, have been faithful to their ideals. They have given willingly of themselves so that a nearly defenseless people in a region of great strategic importance to the free world will have a chance to live their lives free of murder and mayhem and terrorism. I think that young Marine and all of his comrades have given every one of us something to live up to.

They were not afraid to stand up for their country or, no matter how difficult and slow the journey might be, to give others that last best hope of a better future.

We cannot and will not dishonor them now and the sacrifices they made by failing to remain as faithful to the cause of freedom and the pursuit of peace as they have been.

I will not ask you to pray for the dead, because they are safe in God's loving arms and beyond the need of our prayers. I would like to ask you all—wherever you may be in this blessed land—to pray for these wounded young men and to pray for the bereaved families of those who gave their lives for our freedom.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

This speech was something of a landmark. Reagan not only recalled for his audience the heroic possibilities of soldiery; he was also careful to portray the American soldier as the embodiment of what is best about the United States, and as a model that others should emulate. He restored the dignity of the soldier and the dignity of the nation by linking the two at the root.

The measurable effect of this speech was a dramatic increase in support for the President's policy in Lebanon. Of course U.S. policy there eventually failed—but that is another matter altogether, and must be judged by criteria appropriate to it. The soldier, at least, had been given his due.

There are some other signs that the triumph of the anti-political perspective is not permanent. The remains of an unidentified soldier from Vietnam have finally been included in the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery, and Reagan, who has long described Vietnam as a "noble cause," again sounded the heroic note in his speeches commemorating the entombment. He, and other world leaders, would speak in similar terms at Normandy on the fortieth anniversary of D-day; and even the media covering the event were willing, of their own volition, to describe not only the trials of the men storming the beaches, but also the sense of higher purpose these men felt.

BUT these developments are all quite recent, and it is important to remember that whoever the unknown soldier from the Vietnam war may be, his name is to be found somewhere on the granite face of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. There is, of course, a tradition of erecting monuments that name those who died while serving their country: every high school built before World War II has a commemorative plaque listing the names of alumni who died, invariably surmounted by a testament to their service and valor. But these are local memorials, by which the people of a community, a town, or a state commemorate their dead. A national monument is an entirely different matter—traditionally, as William Hubbard has said, the occasion for a broad statement about the meaning of war.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which will be on the Mall in Washington forever, was conceived and executed during the heyday of the anti-political idea of the soldier. It does provide a statement about the broader meaning of that war, precisely by denying that it had a broader meaning. There is no American nation here, no democracy, no American way of life; no freedom, no fidelity, no ideals, no honor; no Communism, no threat, and no defenseless people. There are only two statements, according to the terms of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, that one can make about that war, or any war: some survived it, and some did not. The survivors have their lives, and that is both all, and enough. The dead, here remembered only because they failed to survive, have their names etched in stone.

And justice has been done, because this is a fitting monument to leave to posterity. By the measure of its public discussion—and there is no other meaningful measure—America had come to the profoundly wrong belief that war has little or nothing to do with politics or morality, that war is about the soldiers fighting and privately dying in it. In this sense, though the Vietnam Veterans Memorial truly commemorates neither the war nor the veterans, it is the perfect monument to the spirit of its time, and to the estate to which the soldier, and the nation, had fallen.

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Naming Day in Berkeley

Louis Rapoport

DOREEN* was back in Berkeley now, remarried, another family. It had been ten years since I had seen her, fifteen since we had both lived in that renowned town.

I called to say hello, and she invited me and Molly to come to some kind of ceremony for her newborn son. She called it a "naming ceremony" and when I asked her if that meant a *brit*, a circumcision ritual, she said no, it's a *naming* ceremony.

Her new husband, Jeff, was from New York, a Renaissance man whom everyone described as brilliant. He was a professor like her first husband, Paul, but he didn't sound anything like Paul, who had stopped being a brilliant professor long ago, and had gone off to work as a teamster.

Molly wanted to go, to get out of the cycle of playgrounds and dirty diapers and see some grown-up people. She was also curious to meet beautiful Doreen, the heroine of Carol Lifkin's trashy book, a best-seller which had been made into a TV mini-series.

The house in the Berkeley flatlands off Sacramento Street was overflowing with couples, most of them in their late thirties, lots of little kids, everything at Berkeley tempo, wine and smoke on the sun-dappled brown-shingled porch. Every room in the spacious three-bedroom house was packed with Doreen's and Jeff's friends, most of them from their "radical Havurah" group. None of the people whom I had known in the Berkeley of the 60's was there, but I recognized Agnes Brown, the black journalist who had been involved in the Free Speech Movement and the Vietnam Day Committee. She remembered me as a friend of Sidney Kramer's, and she asked me about the tormented genius who had spent the 70's in hell. He had tried suicide four times during a decade of in-and-out incarceration as a manic-depressive.

"What a loss—to us," Agnes said. "But Sidney was always so crazy intense. . . . You know, I owe him a lot. He and Ben Goldman were always very sure of their Jewishness, and they didn't just say yassuh to the black nationalists who were ranting on about the Jews. Did you know that I converted?"

I was shocked. "To Judaism?"

When I asked her why, she said that the people closest to her were Jews, from childhood on. "My father was a state legislator. I was never out on the streets trying to score smack or sell myself at age twelve. I *relate* to Jews better than to blacks. I respect the history and the learning, the religion, you know, it saved my life. I got raped six months ago by this ghoul called Greasy, the Berkeley nightmare. . . . He raped me for five hours, broke into the house and held a knife to my throat. My little boy was asleep in the next room. Greasy said he was going to kill us both. He was very big, powerful, a black man with a hood on his head. I had never been so close to death before. All I could think of was the *Shema*, you know. I kept saying it over and over and over again like a mantra—*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.* It saved my life. I would have lost my mind without it."

The guests started cramming into the wood-paneled living room with its parquet floor. Molly and I held up our kids to let them see what was happening. A hip, Reform-type rabbi was standing next to the new parents. I gaped when I saw Doreen. I had told Molly what a beauty she was, a princess of the Movement, and here was this plump, middle-aged woman.

Who would have thought that our generation would ever grow older? Doreen had always photographed so well: at the Oakland Induction Center, at People's Park in '69, or in Godard's movie, when he spread some of his $6-million budget among the fresh-faced revolutionary students shouting "Power to the People." In one scene of that film, Doreen, who came from Beverly Hills as I did, said, "I don't have to prove my revolutionary credentials to anyone." She looked lovely, like when she curled up to Paul and let her Chinese skirt crawl up to reveal a silky leg.

In the movie, as in real life, Paul's presence had always been the more impressive. He had been born political, and he possessed that first-born's assurance in whatever he said, smooth but thoughtful while others feared they would trip over their tongues or say something foolish.

Doreen's new husband made a different impression. A distorted, intelligent, snotty face, bumpy head, and glasses. He and Doreen were rambling on about how they had chosen their son's name—Adam.

Molly was put off by the spectacle. "A naming ceremony? Why can't they just celebrate a birth instead of *holding* all these people here? What's so interesting that they all look so rapt? Let's go."

Agnes nudged up to us. "Jeff is right up to here with Noam Chomsky—he's really very brilliant. And he's okay, although he's a bit too contemptuous of mere mortals."

Jeff had three Ph.D.'s from Harvard and Cal Tech in philosophy, physics, and political science. He was probably Bach on the piano, the best Channel swimmer in the world, and a genius of Kabbalah as well. He had written six books and his lectures at Berkeley were packed with admiring students.

LOUIS RAPOPORT, *a new contributor, is a journalist on the staff of the Jerusalem* Post *and the author of* The Lost Jews: Last of the Ethiopian Falashas.

* All names except for those of public figures have been changed.

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As the ceremony droned on, the kids got restless, and we took them out to the front lawn. Doreen and Jeff took forty more minutes to explain how they had come to name their son Adam. The audience seemed to enjoy the presentation, which, I learned later, had to do with clay and earth and reflections of the Eve story and the color red. Finally, the hip rabbi mumbled a blessing and the ceremony ended with gentle laughter and applause.

Then Doreen, surrounded by an entourage of friends, brought gurgling Adam into the sun. When she saw me, she gave me a hug, shook hands with Molly and our children. A sloppy pregnant woman who looked in her ninth month joined us, and Doreen introduced her as Berkeley's leading midwife. Jeff came over to introduce himself. I told him we had come back to the States for a short stay to try to make some money, and that we were going back to Israel soon. A slight smile flashed across his broad face.

"The trouble with Israel," he said, "is that if you have to be Jewish to be a first-class citizen, how can you claim to be a democratic state?"

I figured such a brilliant person would run circles around me, so I got him to do the talking, asking him about their Jewish-consciousness group.

Jeff was pleased and explained how the "radical Havurah phenomenon" got started. "We're all on the Left. We were all active in the antiwar movement. We wanted to interpret what this Jewish revival thing is all about. What developed was this circle of about fifty people—including about fifteen Ph.D.'s and writers of twice as many books—singing together, lighting candles on Friday nights. Very few had real Jewish backgounds. I did. My grandfather was one of the leading Jewish intellectuals in Europe."

Jeff had been a member of the Labor Zionist youth organization Habonim, and had spoken on the same platform with Ben-Gurion in the 50's. "That's when I swallowed all the bullshit the Zionists feed you." But he had actually grown up in the Social Democratic world, in the Workmen's Circle. About one-third of his friends had similar pink- or red-diaper New York Jewish backgrounds.

"Anyway, we all had a sense of wanting to redo the ritual and to create new ceremonies, like the one we just had. What'd you think of it?"

"Oh, very nice," I said.

"So we learned more about the Jewish holy days and customs in order to create new rituals, followed by critical evaluations of Zionism, talks on Jewish socialism in America—but also talks on Cuba and other subjects as well."

Their group had listened to a couple who gave a presentation on traditions concerning Jewish births. Another talk was on death rituals, another on prayers, and another a sociopolitical analysis of Jewish organizations. Jeff said he himself had given talks on Harold Rosenberg's essay on creating a Jewish identity while retaining secular values, the prophet Amos on socialism, humanistic things like that. It was a cultural, not a religious, revival, he insisted.

They had added a "post-Reform rabbi" who said things like *"You* are the tradition." Doreen had planned the whole naming ceremony, Jeff continued, the rabbi was just a master of ceremonies. She picked the passages that were read, planted a symbolic tree in the yard, and bought twelve joss-sticks at the Indian head-shop on Telegraph Avenue to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. They had roughed it out over the issue of circumcision.

The question wasn't religious, Doreen claimed, the question was why circumcision? "It's clear it's not necessary," Doreen said. "It's not now debatable as far as health goes. So what you have is this surgical procedure that *hurts,* and that even has a small risk to it." She didn't want to hurt anyone, least of all an innocent baby.

"Without the health issue," Jeff interjected, "there are only social questions—an uncircumcised boy would have trouble with his peers. And he would be different from his father. That was the reason I wanted it."

Doreen was against it completely. But Jeff took his own advice, to "do what you feel comfortable with." So they reached a compromise. A doctor came over—a member of the Havurah—and he did a partial circumcision. The 50-percent solution. "I didn't feel I'd be breaking a law of God if I didn't have my son circumcised," Jeff snickered. "It wasn't a theological question at all."

In its first year, the radical Havurah avoided the subject of Israel entirely, fearing that it would destroy its budding effort. But Israel finally emerged as an issue. "Only it wasn't contentious, there are no outright anti-Israel people in our group," Jeff said. "Carol Berman over there set up a program getting Arabs and Jews on the Left together. A woman from the National Lawyers Guild talked about torture in Israel. A Saudi from the Quakers' Middle East project also spoke to our group. There's a lot of that. Basically, we're worldly, secular people interested in the spiritual aspects of Judaism, not in the religion. As Paul Tillich said, if you have ultimate concerns, you believe in God. We are traditional secularists—like we have our own Haggadah, including a passage by Eugene Debs."

Agnes walked over to us with a man who wore a shabby, soiled Greek sailor hat and introduced him to Molly and me as an old friend of Sidney's, Bill Zalman.

"Have you seen him?" Zalman asked me. "How is he?"

Zalman was a patriarch of the student movement, a founder of SDS. He looked sad and lovable, a forty-five-year-old man who had become a religious Jew in the late 1970's. "Bill's our only religious member," Doreen said, poking him playfully.

After talking about Sidney's suicide attempts and his struggles with Lithium, I asked why Bill was different from the others, why he had become a *baal teshuvah,* a penitent.

"I didn't have any religious tradition in my family," he said, focusing on my eyes. "My parents were New Dealers, very assimilated. And SDS, well, it's strange about SDS. There was never any talk *at all* about Jews in the organization in the 60's, even though about 40 percent of the members were Jews.

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It wasn't until a couple of years ago at an SDS reunion that we had any discussion about it. We even had a Jewish caucus—it was the first time in my experience that something like that was held in a larger, revolutionary movement. It seems that the interaction between the feminist movement and the Jewish movement is crucial for advancing the revolution. I never really *thought* about Israel until after the Yom Kippur War."

Molly and I both liked him. He looked like a victim of the times, a sweet and vulnerable and lonely man. The others seemed to be sanctimonious intellectuals who paid lip-service to Israel's right to exist. Bill spoke humbly, perhaps a little too humbly—a beaten-down monk among his Berkeley people, who seemed to feel sorry for him.

"We need a world organization of strugglers. Planetary comprehension of our situation. Every nation has a tradition moving toward that place. My roots are in Jerusalem or in Hebron or someplace—but my roots are also in America, in the radical, progressive human-rights movement. Every people has a right to its burying place. Abraham is the father of both Jews and Arabs. I'm looking for the combination between Jewishness and radical tradition so that I'm not fragmented. I consider myself enlisted in the army of the Jews."

Jeff winced. Doreen looked away. Agnes smiled. Doreen tried to redirect the conversation. "The things that are important to us now are the anti-nuclear campaign, health and welfare issues, Cuba. . . ."

ANOTHER SDS founder joined the circle on the lawn. Arni Zampolsky was a devout believer in Marx, part of the Marxist elite that by the 1970's had become a major force in American universities. He had entered the Jewish-consciousness group after overhearing his eight-year-old daughter tell another kid that her religion was "Scorpio." He was another of the "cultural Jews" and said he believed "in the need for a concrete ethnic culture for myself and my daughter in order to counter the rock-and-roll youth culture and TV commercials that surround her."

There was something reptilian in his movements. He exuded arrogance and self-righteousness. "It's a historical accident that I'm Jewish," he said. "I'm a Marxist. I certainly don't believe in 'my people first.' Israel isn't any more important to me than China, Cuba, Cambodia. Everyone in our group is pro-Palestinian. Our only differences are over the nature of the group itself, the relevancy of Jewishness."

Blotchy red Adam, who had been asleep, was gasping for breath, crying.

"The group's not at all monolithic," Doreen explained, pulling out her breast and bringing Adam to it. "There's lots of conflict. David Korn—he was a major force during the Free Speech Movement—well, he accuses us of being too secular, humanist. Politics remains very central to our concerns."

"We're not overly concerned about Soviet Jewry for one thing," Arni sniffed. "That's mainly an establishment Jewish concern. None of us are going to rush into the streets to demonstrate—everyone's quite sophisticated politically. It's a real Jewish, socialist, feminist group."

Jeff mentioned that I worked for a newspaper.

Arni's face immediately registered paranoia. A comic-book reaction: his eyes narrowed into red suspicious slits, his pupils darted back and forth. "You are not going to report on any of this. If I knew you worked for the media I never would have rapped to you."

He left abruptly, joining other guests, snarling and gesturing toward me. "Don't mind that," Jeff reassured me. "I mean, he's right, of course—none of this is to be written about, used by the media. We are not interested in attracting new members or anything. We're just a group of friends with mutual Jewish interests."

I thought they were right to be paranoid about what other friends might think, as well as their enemies—a radical Jewish cabal! Doreen, having comforted Adam, now, in a sense, offered her breast to me. "You remember what paranoia was like—Arni just doesn't know you. And we've been burned so often."

"There's a lot of conflict and pain among us," Bill said softly, "mostly over how important it is to be Jewish."

Jeff looked at him impatiently. "We're not political or religious Zionists for whom Israel is the ultimate expression. None of us is concerned with the goal of living in Israel."

"Except me," Bill said, smiling wryly.

WE GAVE Agnes Brown a ride back to the city. She sat in the back seat between the children. Molly asked her what she thought of the naming ceremony, and the group as a whole.

"I'm not a part of it—you know what they say about converts. We're the most fanatical about the religion. I believe in Judaism, not just in Jewish traditions and cultural Jewishness. Doreen's an old dear friend, and I went to her ceremony to see her and Adam, not to take part in any of that jive. I knew most of these people in 1964, and now it's a generation later, you know what I mean?"

I said that I didn't relate to people who were so intent on only one aspect of being Jewish that they turned it into a cause—some people on the Left did that with their so-called Jewish culture.

Agnes said, "There's some superfine people, like Bill and Deborah Glass and Mike Sommers. Then there's some obnoxious people like Leo Jacobson—and by the way, he's not just concentrated on the culture. He advocates more religious content, more transcendental experience—and he's got supporters in the group. His big rival is Jeff, who wants to leave God out. I don't know how God could survive that. Jeff, like he told you, is focused on political, humanistic stuff, as they say in their jargon. And Leo, he's trying to 'reconnect with Torah.'"

"Snotty know-it-alls," said Molly. "Pompous Berkeley—I suppose they can intellectualize anything. They say they're not interested in Israel—that's fine. Nothing wrong with that. But then they turn around and say they're all pro-Palestinian and Israel is a fascist state. They seem to me just as blind as those Jews who support anything that Israel does. There's

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a real struggle in Israel. People aren't so removed from real life."

"I left Berkeley in '68 and didn't come back to the Bay Area for ten years because all the radical bullshit and racial tension got me down," Agnes said. "For a while I got drawn back in when SDS factioned out. But finally I just dropped out of everything, including my marriage. I went back home to Philadelphia. I have a nine-year-old boy, and when he was a toddler, I started thinking about Judaism in terms of my life and his life, and I studied everything I could about it, ethics and the laws and dealing with each other.

"I aways believed in God so that was no problem. Doreen was very supportive about my becoming a Jew. It was around that time that the Berkeley radicals started to become aware of the need for a spiritual life. None of us were Moonie types or People's Temple types. Judaism is constantly changing, and its values fit what we radicals believed in and talked about all these years."

SHE had gone the whole route, an Orthodox conversion. Most of her old Berkeley friends treated her like a freak. "You know, at the SDS reunion a few years ago we broke up into all these groups—but I couldn't bring myself to go to the Jewish caucus because of their narrow definitions—cultural and ethnic but not religious. By their definition, I'm not Jewish—it excludes me because I don't relate to *Yiddishkeit*. I'm a religious Jew. I'm not just eating latkes on Hanukkah or doing the hora. That's why I don't go to any of the secular *minyans* the group holds. I'm religious, so I'm not Jewish in their eyes. It bothers me because we have a lot in common. We got a history together."

One old friend, a magazine editor, hung up on her when she told him she had converted. Two hours later, he called back, saying, "Listen, I don't think you're crazy. But you've done something I've spent my entire adult life running away from."

"I told him, you know, our generation is older now. We got families. Our parents are dying, and all of a sudden, we need *kaddish*. The Left doesn't begin to deal with death. We got to build new bridges," Agnes said.

I mentioned something Sidney Kramer had written from an outpatient facility in Los Angeles, "Epistle to the Jewish Left." It said that although Jewish leftists should align themselves with Israelis who favor territorial compromise with the Palestinians, their most important work was at home.

Agnes shook her head: "Our generation was so alienated that we didn't even know about the Jewish community here—about everyday reality, taking care of old people. Now I think we should concentrate on our own people first, just like SNCC did. I know, baby, I been in both places."

Movies

"The Bostonians" Inside Out

Richard Grenier

> The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don't soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been.

THUS Basil Ransom, one of the three major protagonists—and certainly the conqueror—of Henry James's *The Bostonians*, which has just reached the screen in one of the most singularly perverse adaptations of a classic I have ever encountered.

Ransom is a cousin of Olive Chancellor, the second of the novel's dominant triad and its most sharply delineated figure, and he has been invited to visit her on Charles Street in her native Boston. The scene is the early 1870's, just after the end of Reconstruction in the South (and shortly after the period in which James still lived in the Boston-Cambridge area). Ransom is a Southerner, from Mississippi. He has fought for the Confederacy and lost everything—the war, his wealth, home, plantation, slaves, friends, relatives—while his third cousin Olive has conveniently retained her fortune and, if her blood is not absolutely the bluest, is one of Boston's leading philanthropic heiresses. The great struggle for the abolition of slavery having been won, she is now—still a reformer—a passionate feminist. Her own sister says of her: "A radical? She's a female Jacobin—she's a nihilist. Whatever *is*, is wrong. . . . She would reform the solar system if she could get hold of it." But here is James, speaking in his own voice, of Olive Chancellor:

RICHARD GRENIER *is* COMMENTARY*'s regular movie critic.*

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> The curious tint of her eyes was a living color; when she turned it upon you, you thought vaguely of the glitter of green ice. She had absolutely no figure, and presented a certain appearance of feeling cold.... She smiled constantly at her guest, but from the beginning to the end of the dinner, though [Ransom] made several remarks that he thought might prove amusing, she never once laughed. Later, he saw that she was a woman without laughter; exhilaration, if it ever visited her, was dumb. Once only, in the course of his subsequent acquaintance with her, did it find a voice; and then the sound remained in Ransom's ear as one of the strangest he had heard.

After their dinner at her luxurious house on the edge of Beacon Hill, Olive invites Ransom to a small gathering of people "interested in new ideas." Although Ransom has tasted in full the bitterness of defeat, and has left the South for New York, where he is a penniless young lawyer, he has retained his virility, his stoicism, and his wit. When Olive asks him, "Don't you care for human progress?" he answers breezily, "I don't know—I never saw any. Are you going to show me some?" And when she presses him passionately, "Don't you believe then, in the coming of a better day—in its being possible to do something for the human race?" he wonders what in God's name he's gotten himself into, but answers drily, "Well, Miss Olive, what strikes me most is that the human race has got to bear its troubles." Basil Ransom, this tall, muscular young Southerner, is, in short, a profound conservative.

The two ill-assorted cousins nonetheless make their way to Boston's South End to the sparsely furnished, ascetic home of Miss Birdseye for an evening among some forty virtuous Bostonian reformers—socialistic vegetarians, Ransom thinks, who would give the ballot to women and rob men of their drink. Ransom realizes with some disgust that he is in the citadel of his enemies—Boston, "city of reform," "the Puritan city," cradle of abolitionism—the people who destroyed the South, his homeland.

The opening sections of *The Bostonians* created something of an uproar in the Massachusetts capital when they were serialized in the *Century* in 1886, for James had modeled Miss Birdseye on Nathaniel Hawthorne's elderly sister, Elizabeth Peabody, a widely admired local idealist about whom many of the Puritan city's "social leaders" would have shared Olive Chancellor's view: "She was heroic; she was sublime; the whole moral history of Boston was reflected in her displaced spectacles." James, on the other hand, draws a portrait of the lady that would have been quite acceptable to Basil Ransom. Here is James, again in his own voice, on Boston's Miss Birdseye:

> She belonged to the Short-Skirts League, as a matter of course; for she belonged to any and every league that had been founded for almost any purpose whatever. This did not prevent her being a confused, entangled, inconsequent, discursive old woman, whose charity began at home and ended nowhere, whose credulity kept pace with it, and who knew less about her fellow-creatures, if possible, after fifty years of humanitary zeal, than on the day she had gone into the field to testify against the iniquity of most arrangements. . . . Since the Civil War much of her occupation was gone; for before that her best hours had been spent in fancying that she was helping some Southern slave to escape. It would have been a nice question whether, in her heart of hearts, for the sake of this excitement, she did not sometimes wish the blacks back in bondage.

A few pages later James calls Miss Birdseye a "poor little humanitary hack."

Much as, in recent U.S. history, high-minded idealists went from the civil-rights movement in the South, to the antiwar movement during the Vietnam conflict, to environmentalism, to—after some lay fallow for a bit—the present-day quasi-pacifist "peace" movement, so did the high-minded Bostonians of over a century ago move from one noble cause to another. After abolitionism had achieved its aim, the high-minded of that earlier period went, approximately simultaneously, into female suffrage, prohibitionism, and spiritualism—mediums, ectoplasm, séances, and all that—at the time (unlike now) considered intellectually quite respectable, even avant-garde. (A comic echo of this anti-rational component among those wishing to "do something for the human race" occurred in a young woman of my acquaintance. Having fought on the barricades of freedom for "peace" in Vietnam, waving a Vietcong flag, she developed during her apolitical fallow period—when she did not know the name of the governor of her state, let alone what was happening in Southeast Asia—an obsessive interest in the occult, in parapsychology, and in Uri Geller, the Israeli charlatan who could stop clocks and bend nails by magic. A new cause having appeared, she is now at the forefront of the movement for nuclear disarmament.)

For Olive Chancellor, of course, the cause for which she was destined was feminism:

> Yes, she would do something, Olive Chancellor said to herself; she would do something to brighten the darkness of that dreadful image that was always before her, and against which it seemed to her at times that she had been born to lead a crusade —the image of the unhappiness of women. The unhappiness of women! The voice of their silent suffering was always in her ears, the ocean of tears that they had shed from the beginning of time seemed to pour through her own eyes. Ages of oppression had rolled over them; uncounted millions had lived only to be tortured, to be crucified. They were her sisters, they were her own, and the day of their delivery had dawned. This was the only sacred cause; this was the great, the just revolution. It must triumph, it must sweep everything before it; it must exact from the other, the brutal, bloodstained ravening race, the last particle of expiation! It would be the greatest change the world had seen; it would be a new era for the human family, and the names of those who had helped to show the way and lead the squadrons would be the brightest in the tables of fame.

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Olive Chancellor's principal obstacle in all this was Charlie. For Boston's shop girls—with whom Olive for some reason had the most inordinate difficulty establishing a relationship—

> always ended up being odiously mixed up with Charlie. Charlie was a young man in a white overcoat and a paper collar; it was for him, in the last analysis, that they cared much the most. They cared far more about Charlie than about the ballot. . . .

THE star performer of the soirée at Miss Birdseye's is beautiful, young, fresh, delightful Verena Tarrant, an "inspirational speaker" and the third element in the novel's central triad. Her mother is of "good abolitionist stock," and her father, a combination faith healer and "mesmerist," puts Verena into a trance before the assembled company until she makes contact with a "voice." One is given to understand that Verena hears different kinds of voices, depending on the section of the country she is in and the audience, but here in Boston before a feminist group, lo, the voice she hears is feminist. Verena, sitting, her eyes closed, mumbles incoherently at first, then rises and opens her eyes, whose shining softness makes up half the effect of her "inspirational" discourse.

Her talk is "full of schoolgirl phrases, of patches of remembered eloquence, of childish lapses of logic, of flights of fancy which might indeed have had success at Topeka." She speaks first of the dreadful misery of mankind:

> Poverty, and ignorance, and crime; disease, and wickedness, and wars! Wars, always more wars, and always more and more. Blood, blood—the world is drenched with blood! . . . The cruelty—the cruelty; there is so much, so much! Why shouldn't tenderness come in?

After which the "voice" explains how the tenderness of women will change the world:

> I am only a girl, a simple American girl, and of course I haven't seen much. . . . But there are some things I feel. . . . It is what the great sisterhood of women might do if they should all join hands, and lift up their voices above the brutal uproar of the world . . . the sound of our lips would become the voice of universal peace!

As it happens, both Basil Ransom and Olive Chancellor are quite taken with Verena. Ransom finds every word she has spoken sheer drivel, "inanities," "trash," but feels he has witnessed an absolutely charming performance. If on completion of her speech Verena had brought out castanets and a tambourine and begun to dance, he shouldn't have been in the least surprised. Olive, by contrast, has drunk in every word as if it were incandescent truth. Utterly smitten, she believes she has found at last the leader who will inspire the invincible battalions of women in the final victory of tenderness, peace, and love.

Once one has the three main characters of *The Bostonians* fixed in one's head, the plot of the novel is simple. It is the battle between Olive Chancellor and her cousin Basil Ransom for the possession of Verena. It goes right down to the wire. A defeated but still virile South against goody-goody Boston. Conservatism against reform. A struggling poor man against a rich idealist. Male against female. Sex against virginity. Heterosexuality against lesbianism (sublimated). And Ransom wins going away.

There are people willing to fight to the death at the suggestion that Olive Chancellor is a lesbian, and they don't much like such expressions as "sublimated lesbian" either. Although perfectly aware that sexless "New England marriages" (also known as "Boston marriages") between women were a commonplace in James's day (this before Shere Hite's legions demanded the "Big O" as their constitutional right), I am quite prepared to accept Louis Auchincloss's succinct formulation: "Olive is a classic example of a 'sublimated' invert; her sexual drive has been converted into a hatred of men and a lust for power."*

The Bostonians occupies a special place in the Jamesian canon. It is his most American novel. Almost all his other major works are set in Europe, and although most contain American characters, they have as their great theme the contrasts between American and European societies. We must remember that James, for his period, was a very cosmopolitan American. Although he lived his first twelve years in New York, his later school years were spent largely in French-speaking Switzerland and he spoke and wrote perfect French. He knew Paris well—forming friendships with Flaubert, Zola, and Turgenev—not to mention London, where he eventually settled.

But in between his school years and his final return to Europe, he had spent five impressionable years in Boston and Cambridge (from twenty-one to twenty-six), and had aspired since boyhood to write what he himself called the "great American novel." While still young, he had underlined in his copy of *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson* a line by Emerson: "We are a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform." In 1883 James wrote in his notebooks: "I wished to write a very American tale, a tale very characteristic of our social condition, and I asked myself what was the most salient and peculiar point in our social life. The answer was: the situation of women, . . . the agitation on their behalf." So those were the themes: reform and feminism. And the result was *The Bostonians*.

But the novel is unusual for James in respects other than its concentration on Americana. As Lionel Trilling has pointed out, it contains by far the most social (and sociological) observation of any of his works. Departing from the style of his other great novels, James fills *The Bostonians* with pages of minute description, and, also unusual for him, he is not content with describing, but also "editorializes," giving the reader again

* The whole lesbian debate reminds me of a French friend of mine, a film director, who was preparing a screen version of François Mauriac's celebrated *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. "But tell me, *maître*," my friend asked the aged Mauriac, "Thérèse is a lesbian, isn't she?" "Oh, yes," Mauriac answered, and then, raising his finger to his lips, whispered in his cracked voice, "But don't tell anybody!"

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and again his own judgment of the character in question. It takes James nine chapters to get through the book's first evening, and twelve —almost a quarter of the novel— to get through the first twenty-four hours.

The Bostonians ran to over twice James's planned and contracted for length in serialization, for none of which extra work he received a penny. He was plainly obsessed with the material, for there can be no question that he harbored a deep-seated animus against Boston, for its moralism, its preachiness, and, yes, its feminization. With his cosmopolitan standard of comparison (which most Americans lacked), James did not at all subscribe to the Boston feminists' view of women as tender, weak, and pitiable. To the contrary, *The Bostonians* alone is strong evidence that he found the essential traits of the American woman above all to be (I quote his biographer Leon Edel) "her assertiveness, her pushing, ruling, dominating mastery of men and children," and even (Edel) "her threat to American life."

It is noteworthy, although not surprising, that *The Bostonians* is probably the wittiest of James's novels, mockery being the means by which James chose to deal with what, as he proceeded with his planning, he found a thoroughly unattractive subject. More unexpected, perhaps, is the fact that *The Bostonians* is the most openly sexual of his works, with its story of blatant sexual rivalry and highly interesting, to say the least, kissings and tremblings between Olive and Verena ("She came to her slowly, took her arms and held her long— giving her a silent kiss").

THE book, when it appeared, was greeted with marked hostility. Boston, understandably, was decidedly chilly. But even Mark Twain swore that he would rather be condemned to John Bunyan's heaven than read it. For whatever reason, the book sent most American critics into a rage, perhaps because, as James knew perfectly well, over the preceding generation the U.S. reading public had become overwhelmingly dominated by women. The book offered women of the period no conventional happy ending; nor is a single one of the major female characters portrayed attractively. Olive Chancellor is a man-hating hysteric. Verena is a charming ninny. Adeline, Olive's sister, is a scheming minx. Miss Birdseye is a moralistic old fool. Verena's mother is a vulgar sycophant.

In short, *The Bostonians* (like James's *The Princess Casamassima*, published later the same year) was a disaster in its own time and caused a serious decline in James's reputation and market. Scribner's, in consequence, prevailed upon James to omit *The Bostonians* from his 1907 collected edition, in which each of the published novels was accompanied by a preface written by the author himself. James later regretted the omission, feeling the novel had never received its due and saying in 1915, the last year of his life, "I should have liked to write that preface." With the passage of time, his judgment seems to have been vindicated. F.R. Leavis, in *The Great Tradition*, wrote that *The Bostonians* and James's *The Portrait of a Lady* were quite simply "the two most brilliant novels in the language."

BY A curious coincidence of fate, shortly before James began planning *The Bostonians*, his mother died, and he wrote of her in his notebook: "She was our life, she was the house, she was the keystone of the arch. She held us all together, and without her we are scattered reeds." And farther on:

> It was the perfect mother's life— the life of a perfect wife. To bring her children into the world —to expend herself, for years, for their happiness and welfare— then, when they had reached a full maturity and were absorbed in the world and their own interests—to lay herself down in her ebbing strength and yield up her pure soul to the celestial power that had given her this divine commission.

As can be seen, this is somewhat at variance with Olive Chancellor's view of the mission of womankind upon this earth. But the congruence of James's views with those of Basil Ransom, on this point and others, is startling. James, in unadorned fact (worth stressing in the present age when the general assumption of the semi-educated is that artists are automatically "on the Left"), was an utter Tory.

Prevented by an injury from serving in the Civil War, James deeply envied those who had. His brother William's closest friend, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.—the same man who, appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court by Theodore Roosevelt, remained on the bench long enough to become a hero of Theodore's cousin Franklin—was wounded and almost killed at Antietam, and considered until his dying day that having fought and faced death with the Union forces was the most exalting experience of his life. "Now, at least," said Holmes, "and perhaps as long as man dwells upon the globe, his destiny is battle, and he has to take the chances of war." William James himself wrote:

> Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built —unless, indeed, we wish for dangerous reactions against commonwealths fit only for contempt, and liable to invite attack whenever a center of crystallization for military-minded enterprise gets formed anywhere in their neighborhood.

When it is remembered that Henry James renounced his American citizenship because the United States did not instantly enter World War I in 1914 on the side of the Allies, it is not difficult to surmise that a further reason for his sharing Basil Ransom's view that the whole cause of women's suffrage was essentially specious was (in Louis Auchincloss's words) that it tended to "dilute the masculinity of a great nation."

James was somewhat dissatisfied with his portrayal of Basil Ransom, since, as he admitted, he did not really know the South. To which my comment is that Ransom might be even truer than James realized. I myself have seen Southerners (military men, I confess) brooding almost a century after the event on why Longstreet delayed his charge

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at Gettysburg—thereby costing Lee the battle. I have seen Southern tempers flare at the suggestion that the South used conscription, since the men of the Confederacy fought, uncoerced, for "honor and duty." I have even heard Southerners, in a mood not entirely jocular, sing the old Confederate folk song which begins, "In eighteen hundred and sixty-one/ Skoogaw, says I/ In eighteen hundred and sixty-one/ Skoogaw, says I/ In eighteen hundred and sixty-one/ *We beat the Yankees at Bull Run. . . .*" I would suggest that no one who fails to comprehend the sentiment behind these lines can fully understand *The Bostonians*, for the novel's victor, after all, is Basil Ransom.

WELL, there was a second battle of Bull Run, which the South also won, and now we have upon us the second battle of *The Bostonians*, which—in a twist—is won by Olive Chancellor, at least morally. For feminism today stalks the land, in case you hadn't noticed, and perhaps feminization as well, pretty much as James feared. And they might well be with us for a long time, if they do not first lead to the extinction of our society through insistence on military inferiority in the name of "peace."

But, in the present circumstances, why would an eminent producer-director-writer team (Ismail Merchant, James Ivory, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), with a long line of distinguished films escaping the platitudes and hackneyed turns of Hollywood, choose to run the risk of making a motion picture of *The Bostonians* which, in addition to being one of the most brilliant novels in the language, is also one of the most anti-feminist? Ismail Merchant is of course an Indian. Ivory, though a native Californian, has spent many years in India and done much good work there. Mrs. Jhabvala, although German-Jewish-English by birth and upbringing, married one of India's leading architects and lived in India continuously for twenty-three years ("I loved everything there . . . even the beggars, the poverty. . . ."). In recent years her fiction has been published frequently in the *New Yorker*, she has won Britain's Booker Award, and in America the MacArthur Foundation's quarter-million-dollar, tax-free "genius" award. Perhaps what we are getting here is an Indian view of Henry James. The team, in any case, has solved the problem of how to make a movie out of such an anti-feminist book by turning *The Bostonians* on its head. How they did it I shall explain. Watch closely.

First, the minor characters. It will be remembered that James called Miss Birdseye "a poor little humanitary hack." Although she is later granted a dignified death, this is perhaps the most insulting description of any character in the whole book. But in the movie, behold, Miss Birdseye (well played by Jessica Tandy) has become simply a sweet, kind old lady. Do not look for the crusading zeal or the idiotic credulity. They are not there any more.

Then there is Doctor Prance (Linda Hunt, who won an Academy Award for her performance in *The Year of Living Dangerously*), a character I have not yet described. In the novel, she is a hard-bitten little woman doctor entirely out of sympathy with the feminist movement ("I don't want anyone to tell *me* what a lady can do!"). With obvious approval, James writes of her that she had "as many rights as she had time for. It was certain that whatever might become of the movement at large, Doctor Prance's own little revolution was a success." In the movie, Doctor Prance's hard, critical edge is removed as if by surgery. Not a single one of her character-defining lines of dialogue remains, nor anything to substantiate James's commentary. And she, too, is played—completely against character—with a dulcet gentility.

BUT it is on the novel's central triad that the sense of the story depends. Madeleine Potter as Verena Tarrant, I confess, is faithful to the book, certainly in spirit. In the novel she is a charming nincompoop, and in the film she is certainly a nincompoop. Charm is one of those subjective qualities that I will leave to the viewer to decide for himself. I, personally, couldn't bear the woman.

Basil Ransom, as played by Christopher Reeve, the film's biggest star, is another matter. Now I would never hold having played Superman against an actor. In fact, I found Reeve quite engaging in *Deathtrap*. But in *The Bostonians* he seems not to have the faintest clue what his character is about. He plays a "romantic lead," a nice young man with a Southern accent, and that's about it. British theater people often say that American actors generally cannot do "period" roles—presumably because they have little sense of the past. They are quintessentially modern. But Reeve's problems go further than this. Basil Ransom is in the stronghold of his enemies, the "reformers." We do not see this in Reeve's performance. Ransom has the most bitter contempt for their values. We hardly see this, either.

One of the sillier things that producers do in promoting a new film is to have the leading actors (no doubt the best-known figures to the public) "explain" the movie. We have therefore been apprised by the press that Reeve feels that, after the end of James's *The Bostonians*, Basil Ransom and Verena live a life "a lot like" that of Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda. As it happens, Henry James makes clear again and again that, if Ransom wins Verena, he will insist she give up this public life on the lecture platform (or the stage). She is headed for the kitchen and the nursery. Furthermore, Ransom's intensely conservative view of the relations between men and women would forbid his allowing himself to live off his wife's earnings. I submit that there could be nothing more radically wrong than playing Ransom and Verena as if they were about to turn into Hayden and Jane Fonda.

The most interesting distortions of James's work, however, are presented by Vanessa Redgrave's performance as Olive Chancellor. I must make perfectly clear that Miss Redgrave's performance is quite remarkable, filled with sudden surges of emotion and moments of sublime awkwardness. But is it Olive? Even as ardent a devotee of Olive as F.W. Dupee admits that James himself feels not the slightest sympathy for her. Consider, for example, the description James gives of

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Olive as she refuses to disclose Verena's whereabouts to Ransom, thinking she has thus gotten rid of him: "Her enjoyment of the situation becoming acute, there broke from her lips a shrill, unfamiliar, troubled sound, which performed the office of a laugh, a laugh of triumph. . . ." In the film, by comparison, Vanessa Redgrave gives us only a look of great dignity, the look of a noble spirit. And in general Miss Redgrave's performance is nothing *but* warmth and sympathy. Poor Olive! Poor heartsick sublimated lesbian! Poor early feminist, who cast her brave light upon the path we all must follow! Poor lamb! Miss Redgrave, in fact, announced in a television interview her delight at the opportunity of playing such a sympathetic character.

BUT the most shocking thing the adapters of a classic work can do is to change the ending, a practice infrequently resorted to even by the uncouth Hollywood mastodons of the 30's. It is something one would never expect of the Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala team. But feminism is the most pervasive force in our society, some say, and the makers of *The Bostonians* dared not affront it.

The last scene of the novel, as of the film, is set in the Boston Music Hall (a real place, which gave way in time to Gilchrist's department store). Ransom swoops down on his prey backstage in the dressing room just before she is to go on stage to deliver an inspirational speech on the position of women. Verena's knees turn to water. Her will dissolves. And, on the last page, Ransom carries her off for good. The novel's celebrated closing lines read:

> "Ah, now I am glad!" said Verena, when they reached the street. But though she was glad, he presently discovered that, beneath her hood, she was in tears. It is to be feared that with the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last she was destined to shed.

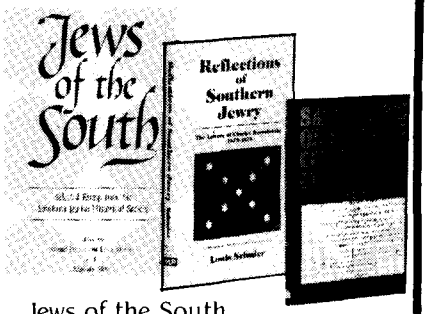
I think it would be a mistake to read tragedy into these lines, as do some, and feel they mean merely that, with Ransom's less than "brilliant" prospects, and their different temperaments, the marriage will be a difficult one for Verena. But there is no debate about Olive Chancellor's end. James makes it plain in the novel that, if Olive were to lose Verena to her cousin Basil Ransom, she would be utterly crushed and humiliated and would never recover. And in the event nothing mitigates her defeat. Having explained earlier, "I can't speak . . . I have no self-possession, no eloquence; I can't put three words together," Olive is last seen in the novel rushing toward the stage to tell the restive audience that Verena will not appear, looking as if she were "offering herself to be trampled to death and torn to pieces." So ends the novel.

It was with some surprise, therefore, that I saw at the end of the current movie Olive Chancellor, unconquered, appear on the speaker's platform of the Boston music Hall and deliver a rousing feminist speech. I do not know whether Ruth Jhabvala wrote this speech, or Vanessa Redgrave, or perhaps Miss Redgrave's friend, Jane Fonda. It is not, in any case, in the novel:

> . . . What I want to say to you is that when there is a great cause the individual is of no account. You've come to hear not the voice of one individual, however sweet, however harmonious, but the cry of all women, past, present, and future. For, like the great William Lloyd Garrison said in his fight against slavery, I say we will be as harsh as truth, as uncompromising as justice. Of this subject we will not think or speak or write with moderation. We will not excuse! We will not equivocate! We will not retreat a single inch! And we will be heard!

As you might expect, at a recent evening showing in New York, feminist rowdies in the audience booed Basil Ransom when he carried off Verena, and cheered Olive Chancellor at the end of her tub-thumper, as the credits rolled. For me it was as if, at the end of a production of *Othello*, Iago were to step to the front of the stage and announce that he has a very good explanation for everything, proclaim himself the hero, and call for a Boola Boola for the team.

Southern Jews



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"Royal" Family

THE KENNEDYS: AN AMERICAN DRAMA. By PETER COLLIER and DAVID HOROWITZ. *Summit Books. 576 pp. $20.95.*

Reviewed by PAUL JOHNSON

THE United States, a republic, covers itself in shame when it is false to its republicanism. That is the moral of the audacious attempt by Joseph P. Kennedy to turn his progeny into a surrogate royal family, an attempt ignobly assisted by the liberal media of the East Coast and by a crowd of court historians and other pliant academics. It has all ended in tears as the third generation of the would-be dynasty squanders its lives in drugs and drink or sensibly flees into obscurity. Peter Collier and David Horowitz tell this cautionary tale with relish and some notable omissions. Reading their account, one cannot help comparing the fate of the Kennedys with the House of Omri. Certainly, Joseph, Sr. "wrought evil in the sight of the Lord" and his heirs did the same; and the nemesis that overtook the family has the ring of Elijah's curse: "I will not bring the evil in his days but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."

To succeed, a dynasty must be philoprogenitive, and old Joe scored heavily in this respect. He had nine children (and in due course thirty grandchildren, eleven by Bobby Kennedy alone), and in addition to his lawful sexual activities he engaged in coarse promiscuity all his active adult life. Aside from his flamboyant affair with Gloria Swanson, most of his innumerable adventures were brief, insensitive couplings with chorus girls, Hollywood bit players, or any passing female likely to be attracted by his money or bullied into bed by his crude masculinity. These included house guests at Hyannis and the wives of dependent associates. John F. Kennedy once related that a friend of his sisters' was awakened by the Ambassador (as he insisted on being called) taking off his robe by her bed and informing her: "This is going to be something you'll always remember." Resistance was liable to be met by the threat, "Your husband is just a two-bit politician and I can kill his career."

Old Joe made little attempt to conceal his behavior from his wife, Rose, who had to put up with much other inconsiderate and egotistical treatment from him. She affected to ignore it all and this, in turn, evoked contempt as well as sympathy from her children. As JFK put it, "My mother is a nothing."

The sons reacted in various ways to their father's boorishness. Bobby, here presented as an archetypal Irish puritan, was even more philoprogenitive than his father, but severely chaste. Teddy conformed to type: the Chappaquiddick affair was a not uncharacteristic episode in a life marked from the start by reckless self-indulgence. JFK reproduced his father's promiscuity with almost mechanical fidelity from his teens onward, before and after marriage, before and after becoming President. He conducted his liaisons at the lowest level of locker-room masculinity, in the drearily competitive spirit which was the invariable Kennedy approach to anything. He seems to have picked his friend Lem Billings at least in part because of the latter's striking failure with women (as well as his willingness to swap seats when JFK was flagged down by cops). His puerile boasting in conversation and letters ("I can now get tail as often and as free as I want") makes painful reading, as do stories of his deserting his newly-wed Jacqueline at parties in hot pursuit of stewardesses and the like, usually in the company of his gruesome crony, Senator George Smathers. According to this account, JFK rarely bothered to discover even the first names of his "stands," who were often delivered and dispatched by a Kennedy factotum. One woman is quoted: "He was as compulsive as Mussolini. Up against the wall, Signora, if you have five minutes, that sort of thing."

The cataloguing of the sexual excesses of the Kennedy family is the most striking aspect of the Collier and Horowitz account, as no doubt it was the easiest to compile. In most other respects, the book is unsatisfactory. It is manifestly unfair to the Kennedys, since it dwells on their weaknesses and vices—including the bitchiness with which their women treated female interlopers and new arrivals—without really exploring the strengths of the clan: their courage, self-discipline, industry, their sense of service as well as self-service, and the genuine streak of idealism which, however faint at times, was inextricably mixed with their ruthless pursuit of power and position. To play down this side of the Kennedy record not only unbalances the book but makes the Kennedy story inexplicable. How could such monsters, one asks, impress themselves so forcefully on the nation, indeed on the world? How could they dupe so many intelligent and able people who were, at least in part, privy to their secrets?

THESE are not the only questions that Collier and Horowitz leave unanswered. They are weak on the subject of money, yet money is the key to the Kennedy success, the engine which alone drove Joseph, Sr.'s public career (such as it was) and, far more importantly, which powered JFK's rise, from the moment in 1952 when the family, beaten in its effort to capture the Democratic machine in Massachusetts, decided to build and finance one of its own.

What we need is a detailed description of how old Joe built up his fortune and how, once it existed, he deployed it. What we get are

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PAUL JOHNSON's *most recent book is* Modern Times: The History of the World from the Twenties to the Eighties. *He was formerly editor of the* New Statesman.

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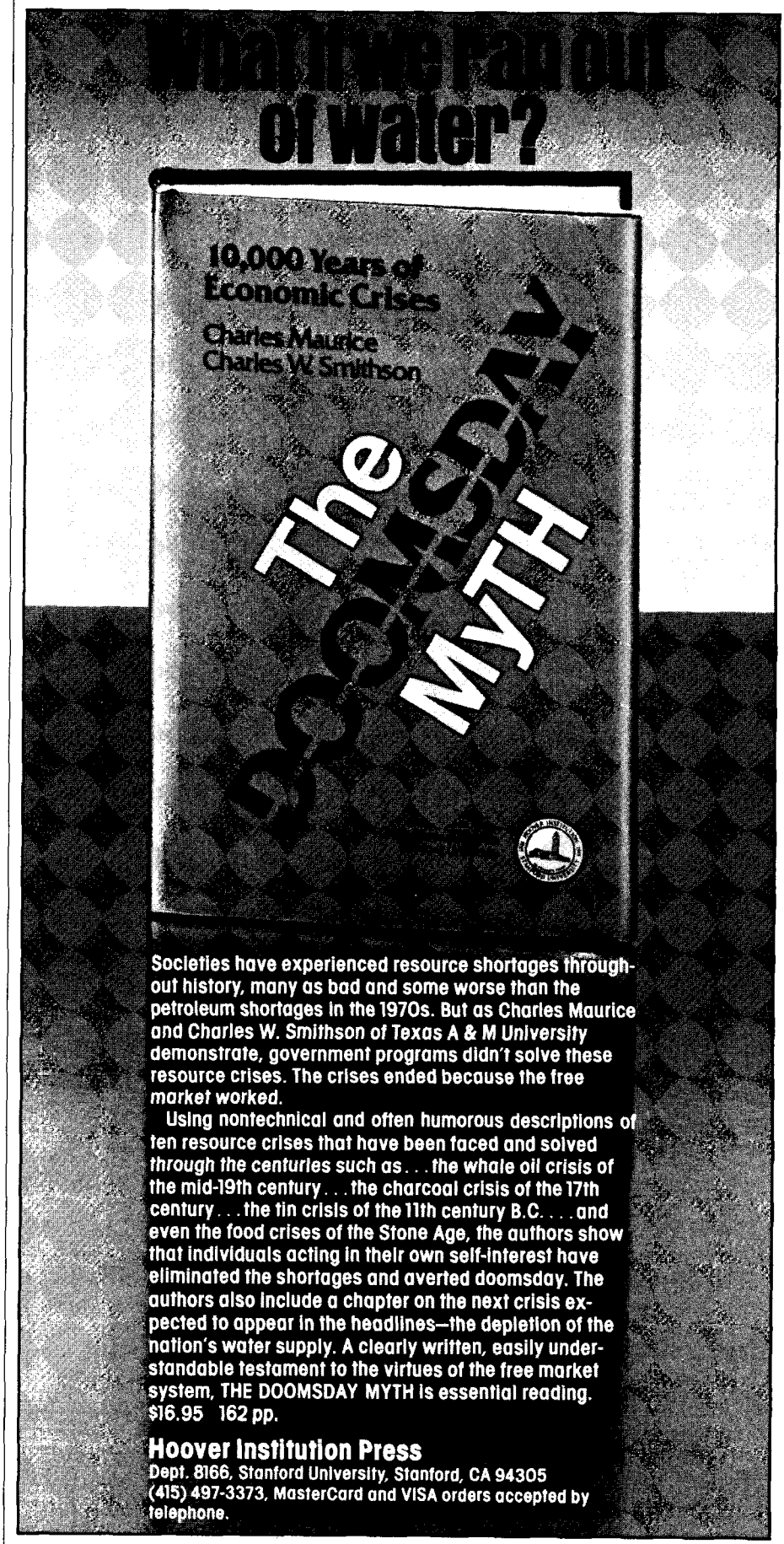
scraps. We learn that at age twenty-five he made himself the youngest bank president in the country by using his inside knowledge as a state bank examiner; that he played the stock market by taking part in such quasi-illegal devices as "stock-pool" trading (i.e., creating a bull market in a stock, then pulling out); that he helped to beat off a bear raid on Hertz cars, and made a killing; that he was a highly successful bear in 1929, thus helping to intensify the crash while enriching himself. He made another fortune (and mistresses) in Hollywood finance, chiefly through RKO, and later pulled off some immensely profitable deals in New York real estate. But this is anecdotage rather than systematic treatment. We are not told what old Joe was worth when he first bought his way into public service under Roosevelt or how his assets were disposed when his son became President or what conflicts of interest there were between the Kennedy fortune and the Kennedys as officeholders.

There is even less information about the way the old man financed his boys. We are told that he "didn't want his children to enter business"; they were bred for political power. JFK, entering the House, reflected: "Well, I guess if you don't want to work for a living, this is as good a job as any." He remarked rather sourly that he was running for President "because it is the only thing for me to do." Like royalty, he did not carry money, but charged everything or borrowed when cash was required, so that friends had to submit expense accounts to the family financial department. The old man asked Smathers to explain to JFK how to handle money as though it were "the facts of life" but this, said a friend, was "like trying to tell a nun about sex." We learn that Joe, exasperated, once accused JFK of "spending $50,000 [a year] on incidentals," but we are not told what he spent altogether, or, in precise terms, how the old man financed his sons, or how he left his money when he died, or how the clan's finances are managed now.

Nor are we given much information about the *scale* on which old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Joe financed the political careers of his sons, though it is clear he spent his money freely. For instance, when JFK successfully challenged Senator Lodge for his Senate seat in 1952, the support of the hitherto conservative Boston *Post*, which began to attack Lodge and eventually gave a front-page endorsement to Kennedy, was bought by a "substantial loan" from his father. How much? On what terms? Was it ever repaid? We are not told. Again, the 1960 election, in which Kennedy beat Nixon, was among the most corrupt of modern times: JFK nudged Humphrey out of the Democratic nomination by flooding the West Virginia primary with money. How much? How was it spent? Again, what was the sum total the old man paid to make his son President? The authors do not say.

Their treatment of the whole 1960 election, the crucial event in the history of the family, is curiously brief. We hear nothing of how the Kennedy people turned up the studio heating during the first television confrontation, to make Nixon sweat. There is no discussion of the fake returns in Illinois and Texas, which probably gave Kennedy the White House. I say "curiously," because the authors seem anxious throughout to denigrate the Kennedys but not in any way to put the record straight for the benefit of their Republican opponents. This book is an attack, but an attack from the Left. Collier and Horowitz are not seeking to write revisionist history.

It is important to bear all this in mind when assessing the treatment here of the more sinister aspects of the Kennedy record. In their heyday, the Kennedys were treated as the American equivalent of British royalty; the truth is they were never a reigning family in this sense, but more like a *famiglia*. JFK may have been, as his admirers proclaimed, a Renaissance man, but there were many varieties of Renaissance men. A foreign statesman, returning from a visit to Washington in 1961, and asked to describe the set-up now that the Kennedys has assumed power, summed up laconically: "Rather like the Borgia Brothers taking over a respectable North Italian town."

There was, indeed, always a slight whiff of sulfur about Joseph, Sr. In the 1920's, he had almost certainly been in the liquor trade, possibly (as was later claimed) in partnership wth the mobster Frank Costello, possibly also in rivalry with the gangster Meyer Lansky. Throughout his life he conducted many of his important deals in the greatest secrecy, alone or with one or two of his closest associates. He was away from home "on business" for weeks, sometimes months, at a time. He seems to have acted as an informer for the FBI, providing details of the Communist sympathies of former associates in the movie industry. He liked to remain highly liquid: James Landis said he was one of the few wealthy men who could back a check for $10 million with ready cash. He had stacks of money in bills on hand for political operations. We have it on the authority of Tip O'Neill that a favored candidate could visit old Joe's office in New York and expect to leave with "maybe $50,000 or $60,000 in his valise."

The fact that Bobby Kennedy made his reputation by hounding Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters is no evidence that the Kennedys opposed racketeering in any form. The Teamsters were, broadly speaking, a Republican-oriented union. Bobby showed little inclination to direct his crusading energies against the Reuther brothers and the strongly Democratic United Auto Workers, though the UAW had been guilty of corruption. In return, Reuther and the UAW provided political finance and mobilized precinct workers on the Kennedys' behalf.

JFK himself clearly never did business with gangsters—he never did business with anybody—but his circle and theirs overlapped in the matter of female flesh. Bobby, as Attorney General, had to learn from the hated J. Edgar Hoover and his FBI that JFK was sharing a mistress, Judith Campbell, with the Chicago Mafia capo Sam Giancana. This was one reason, though not the only one, why Bobby could never prosecute Giancana, and why to some extent both he and his brother remained Hoover's moral prisoners.

It is not, however, the failure to follow up these hints of dark connections and inhibitions that forms the chief omission in *The Kennedys*. It is, rather, the authors' inability or unwillingness to explain why JFK was never exposed in his own lifetime or, indeed, for long after. How was the cover-up managed? It is true, of course, that journalists (as opposed to newspaper owners) are usually well-disposed to Democratic Presidents, especially those who have inherited their wealth (like FDR and JFK) as opposed to those Republicans who made their own way from nothing (like Hoover and Nixon). Humble reporters with radical leanings are, paradoxically, suckers for a touch of Whig condescension. They never revealed any of Roosevelt's skullduggeries, which make the sins of a Nixon seem venial. JFK's disreputable womanizing inside and outside the White House was carefully and systematically concealed by the same journalists who later expressed such moral outrage at the Watergate burglary and even at Nixon's deleted expletives (JFK's swearing was far less inhibited).

There was a good deal of political partisanship here, obviously. Was there also corruption? Old Joe was certainly capable of bribing journalists, just as he could and did buy the support of an entire newspaper. The Kennedys were also adept at recruiting, suborning, and, if necessary, bullying and terrifying intellectuals. From the moment the intelligentsia deserted Adlai Stevenson en masse and switched to Kennedy, the family had its tame eggheads who could be relied upon to beat the drum in the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post*, and later the *New York Review of Books*, as and when required. There were books, too. James MacGregor Burns was hassled by the clan into providing the ideal campaign biography of JFK; coming from a leading academic historian, it became a favored source for much other hagiographical material.

Academics and intellectuals, of course, are easily flattered into compliance by the great. Reinhold

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Niebuhr, seated next to Jacqueline Kennedy at dinner, was persuaded by her that she had read all his books, and in consequence became a fervent supporter of the Kennedy cause. Clerics, indeed, were often pushovers for the Kennedy charm or money. The American Catholic Church comes out of the Kennedy saga very badly. Cardinal O'Connell of Boston made a private attempt to persuade Gloria Swanson to end her adultery with Joseph, Sr., but never publicly criticized the patriarch's outrageous behavior or his manifest contempt for Catholic moral teaching. O'Connell's successor, Cardinal Cushing, was also a Kennedy chaplain, acting for instance as spiritual adviser to Jacqueline. These princes of the Church were as humble in the face of Kennedy might and money as ever were Wolsey or Cranmer before the imperious lusts of Henry VIII. The only prelate who gave the clan the brush-off was the much maligned Cardinal Spellman of New York, whose diocese was rich enough to be quite independent of its lucre. JFK was a bad Catholic, whose moral conduct, like his father's, was a travesty of the Catholic image of family life, but the Church authorities were a party to the deception foisted upon the public, presenting him as a model husband and father and his Presidency as a triumph for American Catholicism.

PERHAPS some day an authoritative book will be written on the means whereby the Kennedy mythology was created and, for so many years, sustained. Some of the journalists and writers who played in the Kennedy band must have known at the time that they were helping to con the American people. It may have been a desire to exorcise their guilt that led them to mount such a ferocious assault on Lyndon Johnson and, later, Richard Nixon. This oscillation from hagiology to character assassination reflects the fundamental instability and frivolity of the East Coast media, a prime factor in the failures of American policy in recent decades.

Collier and Horowitz have now told some of the truth about the Kennedy bid for power which at the time the Fourth Estate refused to reveal, or culpably neglected to discover. But it is not yet by any means the whole truth, and the field is wide open to more pertinacious and historically minded investigators.

Rights in America

ETHNIC DILEMMAS 1964-1982. By NATHAN GLAZER. *Harvard University Press. 359 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

IT IS hard to imagine that a book of three hundred pages on affirmative action and associated subjects, pages written over eighteen years of fierce and emotional debate on the issue, could be a model of clarity, measured reasoning, and, to use a word of unnatural political appeal nowadays, fairness. Nathan Glazer's *Ethnic Dilemmas 1964-1982*, a collection of essays (a number of which first appeared in these pages), is such a book. The achievement is all the more remarkable because Glazer is not neutral on the subject. As between color-blind and color-conscious social policy, he is, as was the civil-rights movement before 1964, for color-blindness. Moreover, in the course of these eighteen years he has seen the cause of civil rights transformed from a struggle for universalized individual rights into a lobby for selective group rights. In what must be for him a major disappointment, color consciousness and group privilege have won victory after victory in the federal bureaucracy, in the courts, in the media, and even in the language: to be for civil rights today is to be for group quotas, or, to cite the euphemism of the 1984 Democratic platform, "goals and timetables," adherence to which must be "verifiable." Characteristically, Glazer's response to these developments is not outrage but genuine puzzle-

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER *is senior editor of the* New Republic *and contributing essayist to* Time *magazine. His article, "On Nuclear Morality," appeared in our October 1983 issue.*

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ment, which in turn elicits curiosity, and which finally engages his analytic talents. What, he asks, is the meaning of this transformation, and, most important, what are its consequences?

In some measure, it is the emphasis on consequences which accounts for the civil tone and the sense of equilibrium of these writings, an unusual feature in the literature of affirmative action. "I am a sociologist, not a political philosopher or a lawyer," Glazer writes. "As a political philosopher or a lawyer, I would try to find basic principles of justice that can be defended and argued against all other principles. As a sociologist, I look at the concrete consequences, for concrete societies." This leads him to judge affirmative action according to a "pragmatic principle": "What policies to overcome discrimination give us the opportunity to best satisfy all the groups of a multi-ethnic society so they can live in some reasonable degree of harmony?"

Glazer is quite candid in assessing the effects of affirmative action on social harmony. He argues, with common sense on his side and in opposition to radicals who denigrate the achievements of affirmative action, that in the last two decades it has indeed contributed to the improvement in the social condition of blacks, particularly in facilitating entry into the middle class. Yet it is questionable how much quotas accelerated this movement, since there was already rapid improvement between 1964 and the early 1970's, i.e., before "soft" affirmative action (aggressive recruiting, advertising, etc.) turned into the "affirmative discrimination" (Glazer's phrase) of quotas.

Now, it is obvious that the existence of permanently depressed minorities, in whose midst class and ethnic differences coincide and reinforce one another, produces despair, alienation, and, ultimately, threats to social harmony. The reality of social mobility, and the hope it engenders among those still immobile, help defuse that threat. The (accurate) percepton among blacks that avenues of opportunity are opening, and indeed are being preferentially opened, fosters a crucial sense of participation and inclusion in the larger society. There is also a more cynical view of the same phenomenon: Marxists have long noted, to their sorrow, that one of the geniuses of capitalism is its ability to recruit the most able among the working class, thus depriving revolution of its natural leadership. In America, this process is known as cooption, and though it tends to be practiced on ethnic, not just class, elites, its social effects are similar.

So MUCH for the benefits. The cost, argues Glazer, is greater: the Balkanization of American society. Once individual rights are made to yield to group rights, and these group rights are accorded only to some, all will scramble for the designation "disadvantaged," with all its advantages: preferential treatment in government contracting, in admission to professional schools, in employment, promotion, protection from firing, and so forth. The result is not just a nasty system of racial classification, but also profound questions of equity.

The notion of group rights was originally intended for blacks to undo the legacy of centuries of slavery and Jim Crow. Yet as early as 1965 the federal government had extended the idea of special protection to American Indians, "Spanish-Americans," and "Orientals." The principle underlying the choice of favored groups had to do with a history of past discrimination resulting (presumably) in present underachievement. Yet "Spanish-Americans" included Americans from Spain and Cuba, neither group a victim of discrimination. "Orientals" included Japanese-Americans—if anything, chronic overachievers. Today, these categories extend to new immigrants from the Philippines and Vietnam who, on their day of arrival, before even acquiring a history in the United States, let alone a history of discrimination, are granted special protection. Not surprisingly, other groups clamor for inclusion, and, if they are deemed racially and ethnically worthy, get it. Indian-Americans (from India), certainly not an economically or socially depressed community, have successfully demanded inclusion as "Asian-Americans" (the correct term in today's post-Orientalist world).

Glazer's concern is that such policies set group against group, and, by elevating group rights over individual rights, violate the sense most Americans have of the social compact that ties the country together. The policies breed resentment among those denied these rights, principally the successful (or, as with, say, Polish-Americans, less successful) immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th century. Among newer groups, they create bitter, often absurd, competitions of ethnic credential-flashing for a choice classification. And they anger original designees who fear the dilution of affirmative action as it is made to encompass more and more groups. Last year in the District of Columbia, for example, there was vigorous opposition to extending to some Asian-American groups preferential treatment in government contracting.

GLAZER's predictions of Balkanization, made ten or fifteen years ago, no longer seem so speculative in 1984. Consider, for example, that corner of American political life where group quotas have been most enthusiastically embraced: the Democratic party. What was so curious about the 1984 Democratic convention were the frantic attempts of party leaders to "bring the party together"—in the almost total absence (unlike 1968 or 1972) of ideological conflict. In San Francisco there were no war or antiwar factions, no regulars or insurgents, no establishment or counterculture to be reconciled. Even the fight over affirmative action was simply a dispute over whether to say the word "quota"; both sides had accepted the principle. The great fear of the party's falling apart derived almost exclusively from divisions based on group identification: blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals, Southern whites, women, white ethnics, Jews. Not that coalition politics did not exist in the past. But it is one thing for political parties to broker conflicting interests; it is another to arbitrate claims for official recognition, official protection, and official favor,

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which are the principal demands of the emerging new groups today. These are constitutional changes in the social compact; to many Americans, indeed to a majority, they are constitutional violations.

Defenders of quotas counter that these are mere temporary measures, that their own ultimate goal is color-blind and group-neutral arrangements in a future that will come into being as soon as the effects of past discrimination have been eradicated. Glazer curtly dismisses their argument. Even if color-blindness truly is the intent of the group-rights advocates, it will not be the effect. It is hopelessly naive to believe that any group will relinquish hard-won special status, and the political and economic power that comes with it. And what kind of evidence for the final eradication of discrimination is a group likely to accept? Glazer's concern is that the emerging new order is not easily revocable. Once transformed into a confederation of groups, the polity will not easily revert to the traditional American arrangement whereby groups were granted social legitimacy, but not legal and political standing.

IN THE end, Glazer's assessment of affirmative action is based not so much on the balance of costs and benefits as on a vision of how a multi-ethnic society should constitute itself. His own preferred vision is perhaps best embodied in the 1964 Civil Rights Act itself: a nation that defines fraternity in the largest sense, encompassing the whole country and endowing all its people with equal and interchangeable citizenship. But he is not dogmatic on the issue. He does not claim that his is the only vision compatible with democracy or justice. He points quite fairly to other democracies, like Canada and Belgium, that accept the confederational idea, and that constitutionally sanction group rights, often at the expense of individual rights. Indeed, this experience is not wholly alien to the United States: American Indians have long been granted special protection and privileges.

But these examples bring us to the rub of the argument. American Indians enjoy—or perhaps, suffer—the official status of a separate nationality, joined to but not merged with American nationality. The confederational idea carries with it the germ of separate citizenship, which inevitably means super-citizenship for some, sub-citizenship for others. We have not yet reached the point of internal passports, stamped with one's "nationality," but they lie along this road. Indeed, Canada and Belgium are cautionary examples: they are the Western countries most threatened by Balkanization. Had they the choice, as the United States does now, they might not choose confederation.

For the United States, Glazer is against confederation, because of the consequences. But what of justice? One of the most refreshing parts of this book is its lack of interest in the question. This is not

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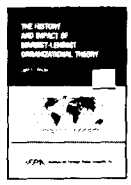

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simply because, as Glazer modestly confesses, he is not a political philosopher—he is of course well-acquainted with the arguments on both sides—but because he suspects that abstract claims for and against affirmative action tend to degenerate into the self-serving searches for a theory to justify one side or the other. And while he refuses to dismiss meritocratic arguments completely, *à la* John Rawls, he prefers to ground his opposition to quotas in their consequences, and not in first principles.

It is, I think, a wise decision. On the one hand, Allan Bakke, to take a celebrated example, was denied admission to the University of California medical school because of his color. Had he been black, he would have been admitted. That is a direct and powerful violation of the notion of justice as fairness. Justice should be blind.

On the other hand, justice makes other demands. One can make a good case that individuals growing up in this country, who enjoy its bountiful endowments, should also share its historical burdens. Allan Bakke, after all, did not spring up full grown at the door of the University of California admissions office. He was the beneficiary of national assets—an educational system, an abundant economy, a free and liberal polity—which helped him achieve what he did, and to which he had contributed nothing. He had also contributed nothing to America's historical crimes against blacks. But it is hard to see why *justice* should exempt him from bearing a share of a collective remedy. There is such a thing as historical guilt and resulting collective obligation. Democratic Germany today, for example, has special obligations to the Jewish people (e.g., not to sell arms to Israel's enemies) and will retain those obligations even after the last Nazi has died. Furthermore, society routinely allocates social costs to blameless individuals, for reasons often of mere expediency, not even justice. In times of high inflation, for example, government will induce a recession, which exacts a disproportionately heavy penalty from the poor and working classes. It does so in the name of a higher necessity—saving the currency—because it knows of no other way to solve the problem. If it weren't the only way, justice would dictate trying something else.

Given the difficulty of resolving the justice issue, it is a pleasure to encounter a discussion of affirmative action which focuses on the question of whether there is another way (like "soft" affirmative action) and whether the current way (quotas) really works at all—whether it might not destroy the social currency while trying to save it—and which leaves the question of justice to the political philosophers and other metaphysicians.

The Comeback Trail

EXILE: THE UNQUIET OBLIVION OF RICHARD NIXON. By ROBERT SAM ANSON. *Simon & Schuster. 360 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by STEVEN C. MUNSON

Exile is an account of Richard Nixon's life from his resignation of the Presidency on August 9, 1974 through his seventieth birthday on January 9, 1983. Based on interviews with dozens of first-hand sources—the subject himself did not consent to be interviewed but did nothing to obstruct the author's efforts—the book consists in large measure of reported conversations between Nixon and his family, friends, and staff; Nixon and his lawyers; Nixon and his doctors; Nixon and other journalists; Nixon and his golfing partners; Nixon and his agent, publisher, and editors; Nixon and various government officials, both foreign and domestic; Nixon and his dinner-party guests; Nixon and chance passersby on the street. *Exile*, in short, is a narrative of events intertwined with a vast accumulation of gossip.

The tale Anson relates is one of yet another Nixon comeback—from public disgrace and ill-health to renewed vigor and respectability. It begins with Nixon's departure from the White House for San Clemente, where he spent the first few months brooding over his fate and trying to adjust to private life. He was moody and morose. He had difficulty sleeping. He was worried about the future. He still faced the possibility of criminal prosecution—and even jail—over Watergate. Numerous civil suits were pending against him. His legal fees were running in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and he was in trouble with the IRS. His immediate prospects did not look bright.

The pardon granted him by President Gerald Ford eased some of Nixon's worries, but it also sparked new denunciations of him by his tormentors in Congress and the press. His health quickly worsened. An attack of phlebitis—from which he had suffered, off and on, for ten years—put him in the hospital, and complications following surgery nearly killed him. The prognosis was so bleak that at one point Nixon spent six hours dictating what might have been his final thoughts on his life and career. His convalescence was difficult and painful. After six months out of office, he was in a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion.

But if Nixon was down, as Anson puts it, he was by no means out, and slowly he began to climb back. To solve some of his financial problems, he decided to sell his recollections to television, ultimately making a deal with David Frost for $600,000 plus 20 percent of the profits. As his health improved, he began working seriously on his memoirs, a project that had previously proceeded by fits and starts. In his more expansive moods, he "predicted that the distaste for him would soon pass away," and that in a couple of years "the record of his achievements would be apparent." In the meantime, he worked on his golf and made plans to visit China.

The trip took place in early 1976, and although roundly denounced in the press, it was for Nixon an unqualified success. The admiring Chinese gave him a red-carpet welcome—in sharp contrast to the cool treatment earlier accorded to Gerald Ford—and Nixon spent nine hours conferring with the new acting premier. Since he

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was the first American even to have met Mao's heir apparent, the Ford White House—which had wanted nothing to do with Nixon or his China trip—was compelled to request a briefing from him when he returned home.

HAVING broken out of his isolation in San Clemente, Nixon began showing an interest in the forthcoming presidential campaign. And just as the Ford White House felt it needed Nixon the old China hand, it now felt it needed Nixon the consummate pol. His counsel came in reams, in the form of lengthy handwritten memos outlining in detail how to handle every aspect of the campaign. Much of his advice, however, went unheeded, a fact Anson implies might have hurt Ford in the election: "Richard Nixon had no comment on the outcome, then or later. He had made his predictions months before," when he had drawn up a list of the states each candidate would take in November. "Without exception, they had been correct."

While Nixon had now begun to play a behind-the-scenes role in politics, he was preparing to resume a role in public life as well. Following the David Frost interviews in 1977 and the publication of his best-selling memoirs in 1978, he began to accept speaking engagements, first from the town of Hyden, Kentucky; an American Legion Post in Biloxi, Mississippi; and the Oxford Union. On his way to England, he stopped in France, appearing on a Paris talk show to rave reviews. Back home, a Gallup Poll revealed that he was one of the ten men Americans admired most. In 1979, he was invited by the Carter White House to attend a state dinner for visiting Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. In 1980, ready to rejoin "the fast track," he moved from California to New York.

"Within months," says Anson, "dinner and a chat with the former President had become a must for political movers and shakers. . . ." While his next book, *The Real War*, climbed the best-seller lists, Nixon began working hard to insure the defeat of Jimmy Carter, speaking out publicly and serving, as he had with Gerald Ford, as an informal adviser to Ronald Reagan. After the election, he continued to offer advice to the new administration, his political influence reaching its peak with the appointment of Alexander Haig as Secretary of State (an appointment which, by Anson's account, Nixon seems to have engineered). If Nixon could never again be at the center of power, he had nevertheless managed to carve out for himself the role of "elder statesman and occasional sage."

Meanwhile, his public reputation was rapidly being restored. He was now flooded with requests for speeches—even Harvard asked him to speak—appearances at political fund-raisers, and interviews. The editors of the New York *Times* invited him to lunch to discuss foreign policy. The press generally had softened in its attitude toward him, to say the least. Hugh Sidey of *Time*, who had once written Nixon off "into the sloughs of history," now proclaimed him "a strategic genius." When he returned home from Anwar Sadat's funeral and a tour of Arab capitals, the Washington *Post* spoke of his "redemption." Even old political enemies had come to regard Nixon in a new light. Upon receiving a copy of Nixon's book, *Leaders*, George McGovern sent him a thank-you note saying, "History will remember you as one of the great peacemakers of the 20th century."

BY THE early 1980's, then, less than ten years after he was driven from office, Richard Nixon had gained the respect, and in some cases the esteem, of many who had once bitterly opposed him. Anson makes little effort to account for this miraculous recovery. He is content merely to chronicle the process of Nixon's rehabilitation. His book, in fact, is part of that process. Though it shows us Nixon's familiar unpleasant side—his vindictiveness, his awkwardness, etc.—it nevertheless portrays him as a sympathetic and admirable figure: shrewd and skillful, charming and generous, even, at times, heroic.

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But while he elucidates Nixon's remarkable personal qualities—his unbreakable character and his uncanny aptitude for public life—Anson overlooks the connection between Nixon's resurgence and his political ideas. Those ideas can be summed up in a single word: détente.

In all of his writings since leaving the Presidency, and notwithstanding his often tough talk about the Soviet Union and the threat it poses to the free world, Nixon's belief in détente has never wavered. Indeed, as Anson reports, he has criticized the Reagan administration for not implementing détente as fully as he himself would have done: for not offering the Soviets enough carrots, for not negotiating with them, for acting too tough. He has also criticized Reagan for pushing for too large an increase in defense spending and thereby sowing dissension in Congress. The Soviets would have been far more impressed, in Nixon's view, by a smaller increase that commanded unified political support. "In a funny way," Anson quotes him as saying, "you can almost say he [Reagan] is bad for defense."

It is ideas like these that make Nixon so attractive nowadays to so many of his former antagonists. Today détente and its architect are held up—by Anthony Lewis in the New York *Times*, by John Lewis Gaddis in *Foreign Affairs*, among others—as the shining alternative to Ronald Reagan and his allegedly simplistic, ineffectual, and dangerous policy toward the Soviet Union. Those who thus elevate Nixon perforce misrepresent détente—which was supposed to contain Soviet expansionism but did not—as a sound, or even historically successful, strategy. In so doing, they are putting Richard Nixon to tactical use in their campaign for a painless accommodation to Soviet power and a retreat by the United States from its global responsibilities.

Because of Vietnam a number of these same people once considered Nixon a virtual war criminal; because of Watergate they once regarded him as the greatest threat to the survival of the Constitution since the Civil War. But these things apparently no longer matter now that it has been found useful to draft him into service. Richard Nixon will continue to be assured a place in the hearts of those who once viewed him with loathing and contempt as long as he gives expression to ideas that are today the staple of our political culture. And as long as our political culture remains in thrall to the idea behind détente—that the Soviet Union is a power less to be resisted than bribed, cajoled, and assuaged—Richard Nixon will continue to haunt us, though not in the way his enemies once foresaw.

Alternative to New York

JEWISH LIFE IN PHILADELPHIA 1830-1940. Edited by MURRAY FRIEDMAN. *ISHI Publications. 353 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN D. SARNA

AMERICAN JEWISH communities of all sizes and in every region of the country now sport handsomely illustrated and often bulky tomes brimming with names and events from the past, all woven together into a rich narrative tapestry. Most of these volumes are frankly celebratory, bursting with civic pride and expressions of Jewish consciousness, and offering upbeat answers to those who scour the historical landscape searching for roots.

More recently, however, a few community studies of a different sort have appeared, written by scholars with training in secular universities and, in particular, in the discipline of quantitative history. These scholars treat communities as case studies, providing data on questions of class and mobility. Thus, William Toll's book on the Jews of Portland, Oregon bears the significant title, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class*, and eschews celebration altogether. Toll focuses not on individual achievements, but rather on "the process of change over generations." Portland Jews curious to know the names and events that shaped their community's past must look elsewhere.

In *Jewish Life in Philadelphia 1830-1940*, Murray Friedman seeks to steer a course between these two extremes. The volume's sixteen essays, four by Maxwell Whiteman, the foremost student of Philadelphia Jewish history, and the rest by a diverse group of scholars and writers, combine old-fashioned celebration—the volume, after all, was occasioned by Philadelphia's tercentenary in 1982—with a firm insistence that the significance of Philadelphia's role in American Jewish history merits serious attention. Whereas historians of early American Jewry have long been aware of the Quaker City's importance, those who focus on the period beginning with mass East European immigration in the late 19th century usually assume that New York's is all the history anybody needs to know, as if its experience somehow encapsulated that of American Jewry as a whole. Yet as this volume shows, Philadelphia continued to offer a real alternative to New York: a different vision of what America's Jewish community might become.

A central contrast between the Philadelphia and New York communities is to be seen at the level of leadership. What contemporaries called the "Philadelphia Group" included a remarkable array of turn-of-the-century figures, including Sabato Morais, rabbi of the Sephardi congregation Mikveh Israel; Cyrus Adler, American Jewry's greatest "scholar-doer"; Solomon Solis-Cohen, a distinguished medical doctor; Moses Dropsie, the businessman-lawyer whose bequest resulted in the creation of Dropsie College; Joseph Krauskopf, rabbi of the Reform congregation Keneseth Israel; Louis E. Levy, a pioneer in the development of photography; and most important of all, Judge Mayer Sulzberger, lawyer, scholar, a key personage in the development of the Jewish Publication Society and the American Jewish Committee, and one of the most undeservedly neglected of all American Jewish notables (his papers lie rotting in their original containers in Dropsie College).

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Not one of these men was known primarily for his wealth. Rather, and in contrast to New York's Jewish leaders, they all prided themselves on being intellectuals and scholars; six of the seven used their spare time to write books of genuine Jewish worth. In addition, many traced their ancestry back several generations in America; most were related to one another; and almost all (Krauskopf being the obvious exception) adhered to traditional religious observance and belonged to Philadelphia's prestigious Sephardi congregation—which welcomed them as members even when, as in most cases, their Spanish heritage was largely imaginary. New York's Jewish leaders—the men of "Our Crowd"—may have entertained in grander style, and certainly succeeded more impressively in the world of business. But those in the Philadelphia Group displayed far more Jewish involvement, far more learning, and far greater interest in literature, music, and art. It was they who played a major role in shaping such cultural institutions as the Jewish Publication Society, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Chautauqua Society, the American Jewish Historical Society, and Dropsie College during the great formative decades before World War I.

THIS basic difference between Philadelphia and New York—easily exaggerated, but nevertheless recognized by contemporaries—had its roots in an earlier era of Philadelphia's Jewish history, the era of Isaac Leeser. Leeser, the greatest American Jewish religious leader before the Civil War, single-handedly created the major works and institutions that culturally deprived American Jews needed to ward off the twin threats of conversion and assimilation. He produced the first Jewish translation of the Bible into English. He completed English translations of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi prayerbooks. He instituted regular weekly synagogue sermons. He wrote, translated, and published many of the first American Jewish school textbooks. He provided the impetus behind the first Jewish publication society in America. He edited the first successful Jewish monthly periodical in America, known as the *Occident*.

The list could continue. More than anyone else, Isaac Leeser made Philadelphia the focal point of American Jewry's religious, cultural, and intellectual life. Those who succeeded him considered it their mission to carry on his work. They fought hard to keep Philadelphia both religiously traditional and culturally vibrant.

Other factors also worked to distinguish Philadelphia's Jewish community from that of New York. As an article here by the sociologist E. Digby Baltzell and two of his students points out, Philadelphia's tolerant Quaker tradition proved thoroughly hospitable to ethnic and religious heterogeneity (the writers somewhat anachronistically call this "laissez-faire cultural pluralism"). The city's social elite included people of diverse ancestry, making it easier for Jews to participate as equals. Furthermore, Philadelphia's Jewish community was one of families and neighborhoods, and to some extent remained so even after East European Jews arrived in great numbers. People who disagreed politically and religiously were still expected to interact socially. By contrast, in New York, at least according to the Philadelphian Cyrus Adler, not even leading Jews had for a long time any social contacts with anyone outside of those they met "in the common business of life."

Jewish Life in Philadelphia naturally embraces a great many subjects. There are essays on Orthodox and Reform Judaism (the Conservative movement is curiously slighted); on German Jews and philanthropy, Jewish women and philanthropy, and German Jews *vs.* Russian Jews in philanthropy; on Jewish education, labor, and politics; on Jewish-Irish relations (though not Jewish-Christian relations); and on such local Jewish notables as the movie mogul Siegmund Lubin and the business tycoon Albert M. Greenfield.

Unfortunately, a few contributors fall prey to the temptation to

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Love and Exile

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sing Philadelphia's praises unduly. At the beginning of his otherwise illuminating introductory essay, Murray Friedman proudly informs us that "here the first sermon in English was preached and the first English-Jewish newspaper was published; here the author of *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, lived and here the hymn *Adon Olam* was composed." In fact, only one of these extravagant claims is even partly true: Naftali Herz Imber, the peripatetic and habitually inebriated Hebrew poet who composed *Hatikvah*, did live for a time in Philadelphia, but he lived in so many other places that it hardly matters. As for *Adon Olam*, it had secured a firm place in the Jewish liturgy long before William Penn was even in swaddling clothes.

But such boosterism, a staple of local Jewish community histories, is in this volume mercifully rare. Most of the contributors realize, as Friedman puts it, that by World War I "Philadelphia Jewry had ceased to play a leading role in the development of Jewish life in America. New York had simply overwhelmed it both in numbers and magnitude of influence." Yet if the death of Cyrus Adler in 1940 marked the formal end of an era, the memory still lingers of an earlier day when the cultured and well-knit Philadelphia Jewish community offered a recognizable alternative to New York. Reading this book, one cannot but wonder how things might have turned out had the Philadelphia Group's alternative prevailed.

Love and Work

POWERPLAY: WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT BENDIX. By MARY CUNNINGHAM. With FRAN SCHUMER. *Linden/Simon & Schuster. 286 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by JULES COHN

IN JUNE 1979, Mary Cunningham, then twenty-seven years old, was graduated with high grades and first-rate recommendations from the Harvard Business School where she had been the beneficiary of the case-study approach to management-by-objectives, strategic planning, and human behavior in organizations. Naturally, she landed several lucrative job offers from prestigious firms. She chose a promising "mentorship" as executive assisant to William Agee, the youngish (in his early forties) chairman of the Bendix Corporation, a multibillion dollar conglomerate.

Powerplay is her best-selling memoir—an account of her life, her career at Bendix, and her headline-grabbing association with Agee, written in a prose that combines the diction of management with the jargon of the helping professions, especially psychology, social work, and talk-show therapy. At first the style is merely amusing, but as her intense, very personal tale unfolds, the reliance of this high-achieving, "liberated" young woman on so many stillborn phrases takes on an interest, and a pathos, of its own.

Miss Cunningham was raised in a religious family, had a fairly typical small-town (New England) childhood and adolescence, majored in logic and philosophy and was named to Phi Beta Kappa at Wellesley, and, before she entered Harvard in the mid-1970's, married "Bo" Gray, a black alumnus of the Boston Latin School, Exeter, and Harvard College, and himself a student at the Harvard Business School. They were a thoroughly modern couple, "schooled," as she writes, "in careerism," for whom "there was no question that work came first." Sharing an interest in steep learning curves, inclined to see life as a matrix, they plotted the flow charts of their careers on a business-school model of rationality, confident that they could "handle" or "deal with" whatever challenges came their way.

Thus schooled, Miss Cunningham entered the complex world of big business, there to pursue her interests in divestiture and acquisition planning. Her decision to seek a mentor was probably influenced by the fairy tale promulgated by feminists, and popularized by sages in such institutions as the School of Management at Yale, about how men make their way up the corporate ladder. Bill Agee was right for the role. He too had been raised in a small town (Meridian, Idaho), where he was a popular high-school athlete, a successful student, and a member of every club except Chorus and Future Farmers. He married his high-school sweetheart, and after college (University of Idaho, highest honors), he too prepared himself at the Harvard Business School. He was graduated in 1963, and found a high-level post at Boise Cascade, then a "hot" company, where his "open and innovative" style—highly valued as long as there was a bull market—was soon commended by the business press. After a few years at Boise, mindful of the time-event chart of his career, but probably mindful as well that the feedback loop indicated trouble ahead for Boise's balance sheets, Agee responded to the drumbeat of a headhunter and went to Bendix, where he quickly rose to the top, succeeding Michael Blumenthal as chairman when the latter became Secretary of the Treasury in the Carter administration.

In the mid-1970's, when Agee arrived at Bendix, the "corporate culture concept," a desperate but misguided attempt to explain the success of Japanese industry, was high fashion in the business schools. In due course, the New York *Times* reported that Agee had altered the corporate culture at Bendix. To wit: he eliminated reserved spaces in the parking lot, abolished the executive dining room, and even removed the conference table from the board room, so that directors could sit in a circle, "for better communication." He also wrote a "self-appraisal checklist" for an in-house managerial training program (inspired by organizational psychology courses at Harvard) and instituted periodic "mind-stretch sessions" for executives. Gloria Steinem was one guest speaker. "Nothing gave [Agee] greater pleasure," according to Miss Cunningham, "than presenting people with radically new ideas, particularly if he thought they could learn from them or become better people." During this period Agee's board was pay-

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ing him nearly $700,000 a year, plus perquisites.

Amid all the attention to corporate culture and self-actualization in the executive suite, there was old-fashioned, hard-core work to do at Bendix. Earnings forecasts were down for some of the company's main divisions—automotive filters, spark plugs, brake shoes, forest products—and a strategy for continued growth was needed. During most of 1980, Miss Cunningham became Agee's "right and left arm" (his words). Together they worked on a long-range strategic plan—in top companies, the cornerstone of the practice of management. In a nutshell, they concentrated on improving the "numbers" for Bendix: divisions at risk would be sold, and "cheap assets" acquired without too much regard for how the new properties related to the company's history, the skills of its employees, or the good will it had achieved in many years of productivity in discrete fields.

At this point, Mary Cunningham's career was thriving. She was promoted within her first year to vice president for corporate and public affairs, and then, when she was only twenty-nine, she was promoted again to one of the two or three most important positions in the organization, vice president for corporate strategy.

Then the trouble came: first, within weeks after her promotion in September 1980, for her own career, as rumors spread throughout the firm that she was sleeping with the boss; next, less than two years later, for Bendix itself, its more than 80,000 employees at home and overseas, and many of its shareholders.

Whatever they were doing with each other, these two utterly contemporary, mainstream Americans, with their "can-do" attitudes and prejudice-free "life-styles" (Miss Cunningham's husband was black; Agee was an officer of the National Business Council for the Equal Rights Amendment), were soon stumbling helplessly, trapped by the rhetoric that had till then helped fuel their careers. They were not "functioning as man and woman" but as "high-minded professionals," they told the Bendix board, which seemed more interested in their private lives than their strategic plan, a plan that would ultimately damage them all. They had merely taken "the freedom to be friends," they told the newspapers. Mary's rapid rise to the top only proved that Bendix was a "meritocracy," Agee told the employees, in person at an annual assembly for hundreds of headquarters staff and live-on-video tape to the many thousands in this and thirty-six other countries.

What they did with each other after all those late nights, in adjoining hotel suites, in the corporate limousine and helicopter, on the way to and from great seats at championship tennis matches in Forest Hills, became, not surprisingly, a matter of national interest. They soon found themselves in a zero-sum game, where neither the root-and-branch approach of the incremental school of decision-making nor the valence-expectancy formulations of the motivational schools could help. For they were only human, and notwithstanding the doctrine of self-fulfillment, the theories of rationality, and the social currents that had carried them along, they were finally caught in the bind called civilization—here a large, formal organization—with obligations to others, and within boundaries meant to channel rather than indulge strong emotion.

In one of his letters to Milena, Franz Kafka, another person with a full-time office job, considers why he cannot lie to the office in order to get away early for a weekend with Milena in Vienna: "In all cases where, among the reasons . . . I would have for lying, happiness, the necessity for happiness, is the main reason, there I cannot lie." The office, he writes, is a strange, even frightening place (to be sure, this is Kafka); nonetheless he is connected to it, and it is a connection that must be acknowledged and honored.

Alas, all the business-school texts on motivation, on maturation needs and ministration needs, could not enlighten Mary Cunningham and Bill Agee on this simplest of points. Without much ado, the Ben-

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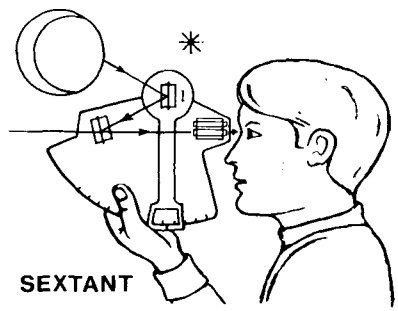

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dix board forced her to quit (albeit with a sizable severance check), and Mary Cunningham finally had to confront "the inherent problem of being mentored." An assistant professor of organizational behavior duly intoned in the *Wall Street Journal* at the time: "A depth of intimacy may have to be sacrificed for the integrity of the business relationship."

About two years later, Miss Cunningham and Agee were wed, after obtaining annulments of their first marriages. In her case, the Archdiocese "judged that at an impressionable young age I had mistakenly used the institution of marriage to try to help someone." For she and Bo, she writes, had been "much more focused on the message we were sending to society" than on their feelings for each other. In the meantime, the strategic plan for Bendix, carried out by Agee alone, with Miss Cunningham sometimes at his side as an unofficial consultant, led to an episode of another kind—a dramatic merger battle between Bendix and Martin Marietta, reported by the media with the same lip-smacking pleasure so evident earlier in the coverage of their alleged personal merger.

In her account of this unseemly spectacle, Miss Cunningham characteristically denatures the details. In brief, with their boards of directors sitting blithely by, a collection of corporate kingpins trailed by high-priced lawyers and investment bankers went at each other in an orgy of opportunism and greed. In a series of tender offers, Bendix sought to acquire Martin Marietta, which responded in kind, followed by a threat from a third company to the other two, ending in Agee's selling off his entire enterprise and bailing himself out with a golden parachute (awarded by his board) worth nearly $5 million.

Mary Cunningham's ambition for herself was boundless; she and Agee were buccaneers of self-fulfillment. By the time her book ends, one large company and two marriages have been pillaged in the name of "new rules" and "individual self-worth." *Powerplay*, self-serving, sometimes misleading, is nonetheless a useful book, illustrating some of the consequences for individual lives and for the well-being of our institutions when traditional notions of personal responsibility and the responsibilities of business leadership are overtaken by ideas now rampant in our culture.

Critic vs. Poet

REQUIRED WRITING: MISCELLANEOUS PIECES 1955-1982. By PHILIP LARKIN. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 328 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT RICHMAN

SINCE 1945, the English poet Philip Larkin has published a single volume of poetry nearly every ten years. Now, in 1984, amid rumors that he has ceased writing poetry entirely—and also amid rumors that he may soon be appointed Britain's Poet Laureate—the sixty-two-year-old Larkin has issued this collection of articles, reviews, introductions, talks, and interviews done between 1955 and 1982 for (mostly) British periodicals. Larkin's wide range covers major literary figures and their work, the art of writing and reading poetry, and a few popular novelists; he has included as well some scattered jazz reviews and one or two pieces related to his long career as a librarian at the University of Hull.

These writings are "required" in two senses. As Larkin explains in the foreword, almost all were originally undertaken at someone else's (that is, an editor's) insistence. But they are "required," too, in a sense Larkin does not mention, for a fuller understanding of one of the most significant poetic careers of our time. If, sadly, that career may well be complete, *Required Writing* becomes just as important as one of Larkin's rare and solitary books of verse.

Just how important is difficult to judge without a general sense of Larkin's poetry. Writing in the line of Wordsworth, John Clare, and Thomas Hardy, Larkin is now considered the most "English" of all his contemporaries (and hence, many feel, the natural choice for the position of Poet Laureate). It was not always so: Larkin began his poetic career in apprenticeship to Yeats, the "foreign" Irishman whose visionary and metaphysical impulses placed him, for all his greatness and mastery, outside the main English line. But this early "infatuation with [Yeats's] music," as Larkin put it in the introduction to a 1966 reissue of his first and most distinctly Yeatsian book, *The North Ship* (1945), was abruptly abandoned. The real English line lay elsewhere—in a land of discursive statement, gloomy materialism, and narrow human limits. The king of this land was Thomas Hardy.

Larkin's well-documented shift of allegiance from Yeats to Hardy was initiated in his second book, *The Less Deceived* (1955), the poems of which were, precisely, testaments of a poet less deceived by the fuzzy transcendentalism espoused by Yeats. The new attitude reached its peak in Larkin's third volume, *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964), and can be seen plainly in a poem like "A Study of Reading Habits":

When getting my nose in a book
Cured of most things short of
  school,
It was worth ruining my eyes
To know I could still keep cool,
And deal out the old right hook
To dirty dogs twice my size.

Later, with inch-thick specs,
Evil was just my lark:
Me and my cloak and fangs
Had ripping times in the dark.
The women I clubbed with sex!
I broke them up like meringues.

Don't read much now: the dude
Who lets the girl down before
The hero arrives, the chap
Who's yellow and keeps the
  store,
Seem far too familiar. Get
  stewed:
Books are a load of crap.

A reliance on simple, discursive statement rather than linguistic or "musical" configurations of words is Larkin's new forte. Above all, the poem communicates an opinion or a belief rather than representing an emotion or an experience.

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Larkin adopted this same stance in one of his best-known poems, "This Be The Verse," in which once again a belief is expressed in a vernacular and "unmusical" style:

They fuck you up, your mum
and dad.
They may not mean to, but they
do.
They fill you with the faults
they had
And add some extra, just for
you.

But they were fucked up in their
turn
By fools in old-style hats and
coats,
Who half the time were soppy-
stern
And half at one another's
throats.

Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens like a coastal shelf.
Get out as early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself.

This is human limitation and Hardyesque materialism with a vengeance. What is more, the statement being made almost entirely obscures any sensation we derive from the poem as an artistic artifact.

ACTUALLY, however, "This Be The Verse" is not entirely typical of the poems in the collection in which it appears. *High Windows* (1974) is Larkin's latest and most mature collection of verse. It is also the most remarkable in that it reveals the poet less in thrall to Hardy, his professed master, than ever before, with the exception of his youthful first book. In a poem such as "Solar," there is much that derives from the symbolist and visionary impulses of Yeats:

Suspended lion face
Spilling at the center
Of an unfurnished sky
How still you stand,
And how unaided
Single stalkless flower
You pour unrecompensed.

The eye sees you
Simplified by distance
Into an origin,
Your petalled head of flames
Continuously exploding.
Heat is the echo of your
Gold.
Coined there among
Lonely horizontals
You exist openly.
Our needs hourly
Climb and return like angels.
Unclosing like a hand,
You give for ever.

This is an epiphany, a piece of "pure being" (in Seamus Heaney's phrase), rather than simple discourse. The poem is an act, not a statement about an act, and in it beliefs are replaced with a presentation of emotion.

High Windows is thus a divided book, and the division is nowhere better captured than in its title poem:

When I see a couple of kids
And guess he's fucking her and
she's
Taking pills or wearing a
diaphragm,
I know this is paradise

Everyone old has dreamed of all
their lives—
Bonds and gestures pushed to
one side
Like an outdated combine
harvester,
And everyone young going down
the long slide

To happiness, endlessly. I
wonder if
Anyone looked at me, forty years
back,
And thought, *That'll be the
life;*
*No God any more, or sweating
in the dark*

*About hell and that, or having
to hide*
*What you think of the priest.
He*
*And his lot will all go down the
long slide*
Like free bloody birds. And
immediately

Rather than words comes the
thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air,
that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and
is endless.

The first line of the final stanza jolts us from one level of reality to another: from the despairing, "unfoolable" (Heaney again) English mind to the contemplative Yeatsian vision of something beyond. So the quarrel between Hardy and Yeats, at least on the evidence of this last book, has never been fully resolved by Larkin.

Required Writing is, in many respects, the prose equivalent of poems like "This Be The Verse" and "A Study of Reading Habits." The literary tastes of the hard-headed, reactionary empiricist are well documented here. Larkin has a famous distaste for modernist art, rivaled only by his hatred of children and things foreign ("Who is Jorge Luis Borges?" he responded when asked by a *Paris Review* interviewer if he'd heard of the Argentinian writer.) The major lights in Larkin's literary pantheon are Barbara Pym, John Betjeman, William Barnes, W.H. Davies, Wilfred Owen, and Stevie Smith (whose poems have the "authority of sadness"). If not all these names are familiar to American readers, that shows just how insular an Englishman Larkin is, and how much at odds with the century he lives in.

As one might expect, reigning over all these prose pieces is Thomas Hardy. "Hardy's concept of poetry," says Larkin, did not "lie outside my own life." "Hardy taught us not to be afraid of the obvious." Larkin's ideal poetry is simple, mundane, narrow—in contrast to modernist poetry, which to him is purposely difficult and obscure. His explanation for the momentous and deleterious shift that occurred in the writing of poetry appears in the introduction (included here) to *All What Jazz*, a 1972 collection of newspaper reviews. "My theory," Larkin writes in this brilliant and impassioned anti-modernist manifesto,

> is that [the genesis of modernism] is related to an imbalance between the two tensions from which art springs: these are the tensions between the artist and his material, and between the artist and his audience, and that in the last seventy-five years or so the second of these has slackened and even perished. Hence the artist has become overconcerned with his material (hence an age of technical experiment), and, in isolation, has

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> busied himself with the two principal themes of modernism, mystification and outrage.

Larkin holds this to be true of *Pound, Eliot, and even Auden*, whose post-30's work, he writes, "gave warning how far literature was replacing experience as material for verse."

The unfortunate "new reader" of this kind of poetry is, in Larkin's words, "like a partner of some unconsummated marriage [who] has no idea of anything better." As for the critic-celebrators of modernist poetry, their job is the thankless one of demonstrating "that the author has said something other than he intended." Indeed, the only thing that keeps these poets alive, since they really have nothing to say to us, is the "iron lung of academic English teaching."

IF WE find ourselves agreeing with these sentiments, and many others in *Required Writing*, there is, alas, just as much to dismay us. Consider Larkin's categorical condemnation of the "blight" of modernism. Are *all* works of art under this rubric merely "irresponsible exploitations of technique in contradiction of human life as we know it"? *Guernica*? *Remembrance of Things Past*? Are we really unable to enjoy all of modern painting, and if so is it because it does not "represent what anyone with normal vision sees"? Is the whole of postwar poetry so bad as to justify Larkin in his refusal to read almost any of it? Can Larkin be serious in stating that, in the cultural life of this century, Louis Armstrong is "more important than Picasso"?

Then there is the much greater problem that Larkin's own poetry does not abide by the harsh anti-modernist strictures set forth in his prose writings. Larkin's mature poetry, as we have seen, is firmly rooted in modernist practice, engaging as it does the symbolist and visionary impulses of his first mentor, Yeats. While Larkin may admire W.H. Davies's "steady, unecstatic celebration of natural beauty and the qualities in man that seem allied to it," there is little trace of this in Larkin's own poetry. His "prose" side thinks John Betjeman's verse will come to dominate the second half of the century "as Eliot dominated the first," and will reestablish the link between poetry and the public that Pound and Eliot broke. His "poet" side hardly feels so compelled to be a popular, Betjeman-like versifier; indeed, Larkin's work is much too difficult and complex to be anything but an elitist taste.

To be sure, we never expect one side of a poet-critic to be entirely governed by the other, and especially not the former by the latter. But in Larkin's case the divergence really amounts to a contradiction. How can it be explained?

We may begin with a remark of Larkin's made in a 1962 article not included in *Required Writing* but cited in an excellent short study of Larkin's career recently published by the English poet Andrew Motion:

> Very little that catches the imagination gets clearance from either the intelligence or the moral sense. And equally, properly truthful or dispassionate themes enlist only the wannest support from the imagination.

In other words, the poetic imagination and the prose intelligence are to be regarded as exclusive realms, involving separate functions and goals, and each pursuing its distinct course without impediment from the other. Thus Larkin's reactionary literary ideas, strongly held though they may be, are put on hold when the imagination takes over to produce a poem, and vice versa. Some poems, like "This Be The Verse," are just like prose pieces; that is, they are written at the behest of the "moral sense." But more often in Larkin's mature poetry we find not beliefs but representations of emotions and experiences—or both, as in "High Windows."

Such a split literary personality is itself nothing unusual. T.S. Eliot wrote of it in *After Strange Gods* (1934):

> I should say that in one's prose reflections one may be legitimately occupied with ideals whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality.

In Eliot's terms, *Required Writing* is a book about ideals, about the way Larkin would like things to be. It is also a codification in prose of the morally astringent poems that are a natural development of Larkin's obsession with the English line. The rest of his poetry, however, testifies to a different actuality. It may well be, then, that the censorious essays collected here are "required" in yet another final sense as well—required by Larkin himself as the chains from which he can, when need be, gratifyingly break free.

On the occasion when his name was proposed for the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, the "prose" Larkin said, "I have really very little interest in poetry in the abstract." (This is, after all, the man who has written, "Books are a load of crap.") Not only on the evidence of his enduring poetic achievement, but on the evidence of the marvelous witticisms and brilliant observations peppered throughout *Required Writing*, we know better.

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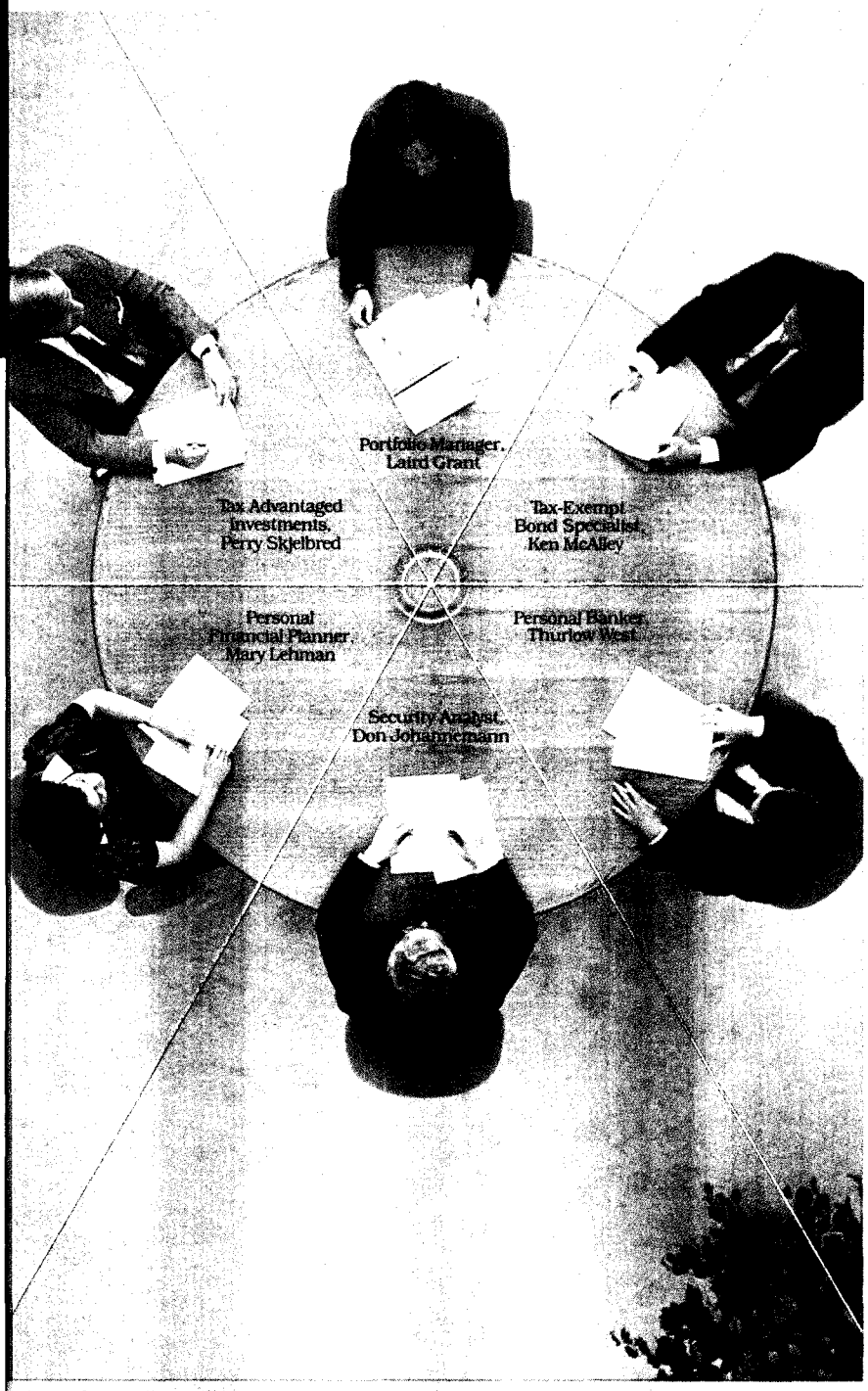

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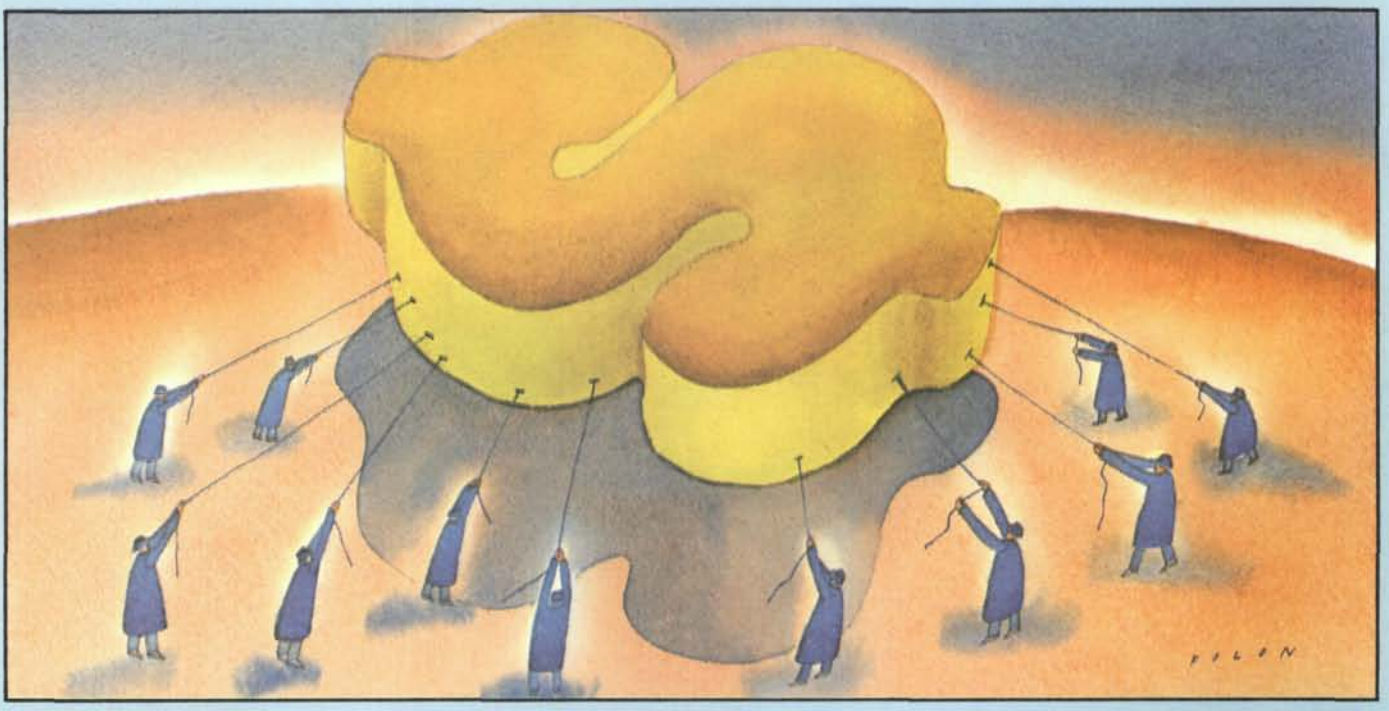

TOMORROW'S ELECTRICITY

Can we hold down the cost?

How can the price of America's electricity be kept reasonable? It turns out that nuclear energy may be part of the answer.

The cost of electricity depends mostly on two things: the cost of the power plant, and the cost of the fuel used to generate the power.

How nuclear electricity saves money

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There are 85 nuclear power plants operating in 28 states. These plants have saved American consumers more than $30 billion over the last ten years, compared to what the electricity would have cost coming from coal and oil.

Even the nuclear power plants now being built, which are more expensive because of higher construction costs, can save money compared to the fossil-fuel alternatives. The U.S. Congress's Office of Technology Assessment makes this estimate: A new nuclear plant will save consumers at least $3.5 to $5 billion over the next 30 years, compared to what the electricity would cost from an oil-fired plant. In the long run, "electricity ratepayers would be better off" with the nuclear plant.

Nuclear power is cheaper energy for tomorrow

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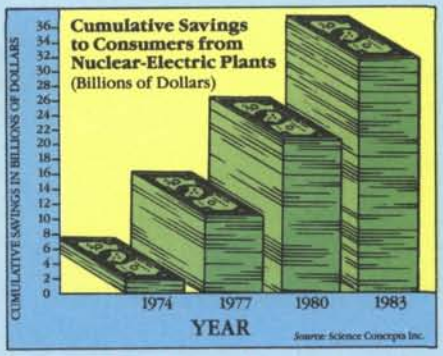

This graph shows how much money has been saved over the past 10 years by using nuclear power. If the nuclear-generated electricity had come instead from coal-fired and oil-fired power plants (75% coal and 25% oil), then America's electric bill would have been more than $30 billion higher. And the nuclear plants now operating will continue to save $4 to $6 billion annually.

Critics of nuclear power point to the relatively high price of electricity from a new plant's early years of operation, as the cost of construction is being paid for. But they ignore the cumulative savings a typical nuclear plant provides to ratepayers over its full operating life. Nor do they mention the proven savings of the plants already on line.

"On the basis of sheer economics, nuclear power can still be a bargain for virtually every region in the country," says Peter Navarro, energy researcher, Harvard University, and author of *The Policy Game*.

New fuels and technologies may one day play a bigger role in America's electric system. But realistically, they'll still be only part of a full team of national energy resources. With coal and nuclear energy as principal players, that team will be able to do its job, efficiently and economically, for many generations to come.

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